

Pedagogy of the Imagination

Mark Frein

Original release March 1997

Online release February 2007

All rights reserved by author

*The author grants personal use only reproduction rights freely to anyone wishing to
download and print this document*

For questions or comments please contact the author at mark_frein@sfu.ca

Table of Contents

Introduction	p. 3
Part I	
Preface	p. 18
Chapter 1	p. 21
Chapter 2: The Liberation of the Schooled Imagination	p. 45
Part II: The Curricularization of the Imagination	
Preface	p. 74
Chapter 3: Imagination and Creative Expression	p. 78
Chapter 4: The “S/killing” of the Imagination	p. 120
Part III: How to be Against the Imagination in Education	
Preface	p. 142
Chapter 5: The Concept of the Educated Imagination	p. 146
Chapter 6: The Value of the Imaginative	p. 165
Conclusion:	
Pedagogy of the Imagination and Ideological Conflict	p. 197
Bibliography	p. 208

Introduction

I want to tell a story. This story has all the elements of a good romance -- heroism, conflict, tragic fall, and the possibility of redemption. There is an educational value to most, if not all, stories. Good stories might help us make sense out of things; or, perhaps, they might help us shake up our sense of things. This story, I hope, does both. It is the story of a word, a concept, in ongoing talk about the good education. It is a story of how contemporary conceptions of the imagination, conceptions that have their roots in Romantic understandings of mind, continue to pull contemporary curricular arguments with little strength left in their legs. I intend to show that the concept of the imagination is at best vague and at worst miseducative in the context of schooling. To find a happy ending to the story of the educated imagination we must, I think, disentangle ourselves from the legacy of "facultyism" that so permeates Romantic conceptions of the imagination while at the same time restoring at least some of the reasons why the Romantics emphasized the imagination. Those reasons include the ways in which the Romantics positioned the concept of imagination within revolutionary moral, aesthetic, and political practices.

This story, as an historical telling of sorts, is selective. It is not intended to be the definitive history of the concept of the imagination or even the definitive history of the concept of imagination in education although it certainly strives to

give one account of the latter. As such it leaves much unsaid. The philosophical and psychological importance of the imagination (as a word in the English language) is almost exclusively a product of an identifiable Western canon. Thus it is also the product, if product is a suitable word, of particular social, cultural, and material contexts. It is a concept with a gender and face -- predominantly that of a white man of the academic or cultural elite. We could look elsewhere for the imagination, especially if we do not restrict ourselves to the word "imagination." But this is story about a particular present fix: the problem of how to educate the imagination. As such, I believe we need to concentrate on how we got into this fix and that requires looking certain places and not others.

The first place to look is post-Enlightenment Europe. A revolution in thinking about the imagination was to take place in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. While Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, David Hume, and Immanuel Kant placed a great deal of importance in the imagination as the faculty which organizes sense-perception, later thinkers of the Romantic period extended a more active account of the creative imagination. The Romantic "age" heralded a new understanding of the mind and its relationship to the world with this change in the theory of the imagination. The mind, long held to be mirror-like in its ability to reproduce the objects it perceives, became a brilliant lamp, with its own creative, inner-light (Abrams, 1981). Rather than being a *tabula rasa* on which experience writes, the mind was seen as having its own inner nature -- "an analogous microcosm of the world of nature" (De Man, 1983, pp. 170-171).

This change opened new possibilities for education, as would any revolution in thinking about the mind. As the conception of mind, and imagination as its primary creative faculty, took a new, active role in human understanding and expression thinkers sought to articulate educational practices which would foster the growth of this lamp-like mind. Romanticism produced some of the first “educational” theorists of the Western world. Combining the naturalism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau with Romantic conceptions of the creative imagination, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel argued for an education which would free the creative powers of the child. Close on the heels of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and other Romantic educational theorists followed major figures of the progressive movement in North America and Europe. Despite individual differences in philosophy and practice, thinkers such as Colonel F.W. Parker, Louise Rosenblatt, John Dewey, and Maria Montessori incorporated the idea of the active, creative mind and the expressive imagination in their educational theories and practical suggestions. The development of the imagination was especially important in literature and the arts, where works of beauty were seen as the sustenance for a healthy and growing imagination.

The imagination, for educational reformers, was more than simply a mental faculty which needed a good education. It was a powerful weapon in the war against traditional education. The imagination, conceived variously as the key to morality, creativity, and learning in general, was used as a reason to include the arts and literature in the curriculum. It was a reason to reject

traditionalist models of education that emphasized rote learning and accept a model which construed the child as an active participant in education.

The modern era has brought massive shifts in thinking about mind, self, Nature, and society. Two world wars and the Holocaust certainly helped shake the confidence and self-assertive expressivism of Romanticism. Romantic and pre-Romantic accounts of mind, especially the "faculty" psychology of the imagination, came under damaging scrutiny in many psychological and philosophical discourses. In education, the demand for scientific and technological progress in the face of Cold War threats eclipsed the goals of personal and social growth of the early progressives. Behaviorism, as the "new" scientific psychology dominant in education, avoided talk of the imagination since there was no easy way to observe it in action (Egan, 1992, p. 34; Gardner, 1985). It was not until fairly recently that changes in psychological theory (in particular the rise of developmental psychology and constructivism) once again popularized creativity and the imagination in the curriculum.

But the conception of the imagination that has survived through the twentieth century is severely weakened, pulled by a number of serious theoretical tensions. There is little agreement among major psychological and philosophical fields as to the nature of mind. Consequently, there are great disparities in modern conceptions of the imagination and much disagreement about the way to educate it. The conception that has survived, however, is in many respects the same as the imagination of the Romantics although the similarity comes from the uses to which it is put in educational arguments. Few

educational theorists would endorse a strictly Romantic account of the imagination as a distinct faculty within the mind, although we shall see that this language is still present in education talk. Many more feel, as did a number of prominent Romantic philosophers and poets, that the imagination is key to creative genius, moral sensibility, and self-realization.

As we look to contemporary educational theory and practice we see the imagination poised in the midst of cultural wars -- a banner, perhaps, on the battleground of social change. Those interested in restoring a stable, morally upstanding (sometimes spiritually-based) social order are likely to want education to control or rein in what they understand the imagination to be. Those who wish to reform society want to encourage imagination within educational practice. We have much in common with early Greek and Hebrew thinkers who portrayed the imagination as both divine and diabolical in nature. The human mind can envision change. For those who desire change, this power is divine. For those who do not, it is diabolical.

Humankind has always and will always engage in real struggles over possibility -- possible societies, possible moralities, possible economies, possible spiritualities. The cultural war over the imagination is not unique to our times. The applicability of the Romantic imagination in our context as well as in the early 19th century Britain of the Romantic poets and the early 20th century America of the progressive reformers is not a feature of "historical repetition" but rather ongoing reactions to the limitations placed upon human possibility.

Romantic poet William Blake saw British industrialization and the supremacy of a technocratic logic as a dark god crushing individual expression and freedom . All the Romantic poets saw the possibility contained within a young America and the eventual horrible actuality of the French revolution. Similar challenges elicit similar responses. Early 20th century education reformers in North America such as Colonel Francis Parker and John Dewey were also concerned about a loss of self-expression and free-thinking in the face of increasing industrialization. The same holds true for many of those concerned about the imagination in education today . Comparing the context of early 20th century progressivism to that of today, Vito Perrone writes:

While enrolling increasingly larger numbers, though remaining far from anything approaching democratic universalism, the schools were struggling -- not just with the numbers of students and their diversity but in relation to purposes. In many respects, conditions today are more similar than different. Our current circumstances look a lot more like those in 1900 in regard to societal and schooling challenges. (Perrone, 1991, p. 9)

What alarmed Blake, Shelley, and Wordsworth (among many others) and what alarmed Dewey, Montessori, and Parker (among many others) is very much the same as what alarms many advocates of the imagination in contemporary

education discourse. It is the sacrifice of personal and social possibility on the altar of technological and industrial progress.

Unfortunately, the education of the imagination in much education talk brings the lamb to slaughter. Bombarded with demands for relevance, job-preparation, and global competition public schools are nervously trying to supply evidence that they are doing a good job. Hard, "objective" data and test scores are seen as the only proof worth making the nightly news or inclusion in presidential speeches. Thus there is continued pressure to turn almost every desirable educational outcome into a testable, quantifiable, and isolatable "skill." The drive to show parents results and to hand big businesses well-prepared workers reduces a great deal of education discourse to "outcomes." While the "skill" of imagination may sound good to policy-makers and measurement specialists, the manipulation of blocks and the making of decorative costumes is a far cry from the transformative vision of the Romantics.

What is most in need of keeping in any contemporary discussion of the imagination and imaginative work in education is the sense that there are larger social purposes to the use of the "imagination" and that there are larger moral, social, and political reasons for imaginative thought and action. While we must not become trapped in nostalgia for a purer form of society and a return to Nature, we must recover some of the fiery transformative spirit of Blake or Percy Bysshe Shelley when he wrote "The great instrument of moral good is the imagination" (Shelley, 1977, p. 488). Even if we choose not to embrace the particulars of the Romantic conception of the imagination or the particulars of

Romantic aesthetic and moral theory, we can work to emphasize the relationship between our ability to question (which is certainly one component of what we usually take to be our “imagination” at work) and our status as free-thinking individuals. If we are to realize a more just and equitable society we must be able to envision and *imagine* it.

Educational theorist Maxine Greene, in a recent article entitled "Art and Imagination: Reclaiming the Sense of Possibility" captures the problem. She argues, in the face of the American Goals 2000 initiative:

The existential contexts of education reach far beyond what is conceived of in Goals 2000. They have to do with the human condition in these often desolate days, and in some ways they make the notions of world-class achievement, benchmarks, and the rest seem superficial and limited, if not absurd. (Greene, 1995, p. 378)

Greene is certainly not lacking in transformative spirit. She, however, and other educational theorists who are concerned about the lack of imagination in schools and school policy-making are often trapped in the language of the Romantic conception of imagination -- a language which does not have the theoretical strength it once did. Curricular arguments are made in the name of the imagination, but without a clear understanding of what the imagination is these arguments lose a great deal of theoretical strength. The basic problem is that

curricular arguments are offered which continue to sing the praise of the imagination but rely upon the imagination as something with literal meaning.

Concepts are entities with histories and occasionally entities which undergo significant sea-changes. The concept of the imagination, I believe, stands at the brink of a sea-change. It stands at the often hazy border between literal and figurative language. On the far side of figurative "territory" are words such as "ether" or "humor" which once had meaning in empirical study but are now seldom even used in metaphoric talk. The concept of the imagination is more like the concept of the soul -- waffling back and forth, depending on context (and belief, in particular) between literal and figurative meaning.

Trying to avoid or subvert the banal language of the institution, education reformers have long invoked such "border" concepts as the soul or imagination. It is, as Greene puts it above, to call attention away from "benchmarks" and test scores to questions of the human condition. There is a significant risk, however, in losing sight of educational practice. When we ask teachers to teach our children we ask them to change our children for the better. We may have endless debates about what constitutes educational "betterment" but we, at the very least, want our children to gain *something* from the educational experience. It is what John Dewey called growth. When we ask, therefore, our teachers to improve or in some way "develop" the imagination we are in serious trouble if the imagination is put forward as simply a metaphor.

I am not trying to police the concept of the imagination. There is a time and place for clarity and a time and place for highly figurative language. The

language of education, I believe, needs both. But the value of imagination is in danger of suffering the same defeat as did a number of progressivist educational goals near the end of the progressive era in American education -- of being seen as an educational frill, something too amorphous and too distant from "real life" to warrant attention.¹ It is in danger because when teachers look for evidence that they are succeeding in developing it, they cannot possibly find anything whatsoever.

The answer does not lie in making the imagination "fit" into the language of cognitive skills, as I mentioned above. The root of the problem for education is an over-emphasis on the imagination as a object of education and a consequent tangling of the concepts of "imagination" and "imaginative." The solution is a change from talk about the imagination to talk about the imaginative in education. Influenced by the Romantic conception of the imagination as an "exercisable" faculty, contemporary thinkers assume a causal link between the use of one's imagination and imaginative work. Yet one cannot exercise a metaphor and one cannot improve that which has no empirical meaning -- not without the danger of being called to task by those wishing to see "results." The imaginative must be separated from the Romantic conception of the imagination and its value must be made clear to educators.

This is the project. It is one of conceptual burial but also conceptual renewal. It is my hope that this project, this story, has elements of the myth of the phoenix -- the magical bird which, at the time of its death, consumed itself

¹ Lawrence Cremin explores a number of the reasons why early progressive reforms began losing strength in the middle part of the 20th century in his *Transformation of the School* (1969). Relevance and

totally in self-immolation only to be reborn anew from its ashes. The Romantic conception of the imagination continues to mislead our educational efforts and weakens the case for imaginative thinking in education. I hope that, by putting to rest the concept of the imagination in education, I may allow the value of the imaginative, in a variety of human enterprises, to slip through undamaged by the forces which would limit and constrain speculation and boundary-pushing work. The imagination is, I believe, problematically construed in many areas as an educational end-in-itself. The *imaginative* will not guarantee that better work is done in education but it will point in a direction of movement and re-evaluation. The drive for the imaginative will, however, encourage us to look for language that allows us to recast old and new problems in new ways. This investigation is, I hope, such a search -- a search for a new vocabulary with which we can tackle educational problems.

technological progress are high on his list.

REMARKS ABOUT METHOD

The task of plotting the trajectory of an idea through time requires a mix of disciplinary approaches. I take, as one of my primary guides, philosopher of language and mind Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein was also interested in the concept of the imagination and we shall look a bit more closely at his remarks on the concept later. He wrote, on the imagination:

One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when one imagines anything, but how the word 'imagination' is used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about words. For the question as to the nature of the imagination is as much about the word 'imagination' as my question is. And I am only saying that the question is not to be decided -- neither for the person who does the imagining, nor for anyone else -- by pointing; nor yet by a description of any process. (Wittgenstein, 1983, p. 116e)

Wittgenstein forces us to realize that we will likely find it difficult if not impossible to “point at” the imagination. We will find it difficult precisely because there is nothing to point at (compare to “pointing at” a rock or tree). We still do not have

the capabilities to pop open the skull and declare that we see the imagination.¹

Whatever our imagination “is”, it is understood and defined by the theorizing and conceptualizing that accompanies the word.

I would take Wittgenstein’s advice farther than perhaps he would. In understanding the “use” of the word imagination I think it of great importance that we concentrate on the moral, social, religious, political, and aesthetic battles that the “users” were fighting with the word, the arguments they were hoping to advance and win. We must frame the use as well as understand its linguistic context.

Consequently, this investigation is fundamentally historicist in nature, with the assumption that the meaning of concepts and the import of arguments is tied not only to their use and expression at any particular time but their use, power, and persuasive force over time.² Thus this investigation draws upon not only philosophical sources but on history of educational ideas and literary and social theory.

The aim of this project is to re-examine and change the vocabulary we use in educational discourse. Philosophers of education Jerrold Coombs and LeRoi Daniels argue that cases for conceptual change in education should do two basic things: critically reflect upon prior and current use of the concept(s) in

¹ Neurologists may indeed tell us that we use certain sections of our brain more than others when we “call to mind” images but there has been much more to the concept of the imagination than the active conjuring of “images” (as we shall see).

² There are simply too many modern theorists with an “historicist” bent to blithely mention a few as fundamental -- arguably, virtually all contemporary theoretical avenues (especially postmodernism) are informed by historicist leanings. I bring to this work, in particular, my readings of Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault and Alisdair MacIntyre -- social philosophers who, although advancing very dissimilar arguments, share a commitment to establishing their philosophy and social theory in the context of detailed historical work.

question and propose the conceptual change based upon such critical reflection (Coombs and Daniels, 1991). They suggest, “The important part of any CD [Conceptual Development] is the analytic task of discovering the meaning persons attach to the concept or set of concepts the conception is meant to reshape or replace” (p. 34). In the first two parts to this work (“Romantic Roots” and “The Curricularization of the Imagination”) I shall give an account of the past and current use of the concept of the imagination that focuses on the status of the concept within current education discourse. My aim is to understand how the development of the concept within certain philosophical and education traditions has largely determined the status of concept of the imagination in education today. While I cannot address every thinker who touched upon the concept of the imagination or even every thinker who has argued for the importance of the imagination within education, I have selected thinkers who have had the most influence in ongoing theorizing about the imagination education. The last third of this work, “How to Be Against the Imagination in Education” contains my proposals for conceptual reconstruction of the imagination and separation of the concepts of “imagination” and “imaginative” in education talk.

This work is not a policy document, however. I hope that what I have to present in the following pages can inform teachers’ talk and decision-making but most importantly, I hope that it invites educators to reconsider their assumptions about the educational value of the imagination.¹

¹ In the initial stages of this work I spoke to a number of educators about the concept of the imagination in their practices. I believe that the most important follow-up to this investigation would be a more thorough encounter with the language of educational practice.

Part I

Romantic Roots

In the two chapters that follow, I want to establish the foundation for the investigation and for my argument that we are currently in a fix when it comes to educating the imagination precisely because we are trying to educate *it*. Educators are led to believe that by variously growing, developing, or “sophisticating” the imagination through an assortment of curricular materials and strategies, or by letting it roam more or less free, important educational outcomes such as creative expression, individuality, empathy, and critical thinking are achieved. The link, I shall argue, is assumed to be causal -- that by developing the capacity or faculty of the imagination we develop children and students with the educationally valuable abilities listed above. This emphasis on the imagination as “developable” educational object, I want to argue throughout the work, is what both disguises and takes us away from what is most at stake in talk about the imagination: the social struggles over the value of such things as creative expression, individuality, empathy, and critical thinking.

Part I, then, asks the general historical and philosophical question -- what has led educators to believe that the imagination is an important object of education and mental development? The search for an answer to this question takes us not to the source, if there is such a thing, of thinking about the imagination but to an era in European thought during which the concept of the imagination went through a significant change. The imagination played the lead

role in the philosophical and aesthetic drama that was Romanticism.¹ Romantic thought elevated the importance of the individual mind to new and perhaps previously unknown heights. The Romantics positioned themselves squarely against tradition of all sorts -- whether political, moral, religious, philosophical, or aesthetic. The imagination was, for Romantic philosophers, poets, and educators, one of the primary “stakes” with which they marked their new position (Engell, 1982).

Educators of this century have reaped the benefits but also, I shall eventually argue, suffered the burden of this revolution in thinking. The concept of the imagination is deeply rooted in, and informed by, the Romantic values of individuality, creative expression, empathetic understanding, and social transformation. For example, the imagination was an ideological tool, perhaps even weapon, for the British Romantic poets in their efforts to argue against neo-Classical poetics and aesthetics, the status of “Reason” as primary intellectual virtue, and tyrannous governmental and religious traditions. It is very important to recognize the role that the imagination played in Romantic thinking and also early Romantic pedagogy. To take the imagination of Fichte, Coleridge, or Pestalozzi as ideologically neutral is to miss the fundamental way in which these and other Romantics used the concept of imagination. We shall see, in particular, the role of the imagination in early progressive educational reform in Europe and North America.

Yet we are currently in danger of missing this. Elmo, on *Sesame Street*, gleefully tells my daughter to just “use your imagination.” Educational authors

¹ I shall dwell more on exactly how I wish to understand this blanket term in Chapter One.

advise us that we must train the mental “skill” of imagination to develop the whole child (Heath, 1994, p. 25). The values are there, of course. *Sesame Street*, for example, has been on the forefront of television programming for children that emphasizes and embraces creative expression, individuality, and respect for cultural difference. But what has been lost since the Romantics is the sense of the *consequences* of “using your imagination” and the social, moral, and political reasons *why* we should “use our imagination.” The Romantics set out to present a revolutionary aesthetics, theory of knowledge, and social vision. We may or may not agree that they either succeeded or were altogether right-headed in their critiques, but this is not as important as understanding what has happened to the concept of the imagination since the Romantics wielded it with such vigor. The imagination of today has been purged of ideological content to make it more acceptable in educational discourse. It has been made innocent to fit the supposed exploratory innocence of children. This loss, I wish to argue, is wholly or at least mostly due to the way in which the Romantic imagination was imported into education.

Chapter One: The Liberation of the Imagination

In this chapter we look toward the origins of the concept of the imagination for the purposes of grounding the arguments that follow. I say look *toward* and not look *at* the origins of the concept to avoid the misleading suggestion that the "roots" of our understanding of the imagination can ultimately be pinned down to a particular place and time. The aim of this chapter is not to discover the origins of the concept of the imagination but to mark a very important change in the meaning and import of the imagination for contemporary educational discourse -- to see how the concept became educationally virulent, to suggest a medical metaphor. This change, I shall attempt to show, is directly due to the influence of thinkers who span both the Enlightenment and Romantic periods. The change itself, however, is part of a greater shift in the understanding of self and mind that characterized late Romantic thought.

First, I want to step gingerly into the thorny mess involved with such words as Enlightenment and Romantic and dwell particularly on how I wish to use the term "romantic". Not only does the word romantic have a myriad of aesthetic shades of meaning, its upper-case alter-ego "Romanticism" can be applied to numerous different philosophical, literary, artistic, and musical movements roughly falling within the 1780-1820 period. Romanticism, as characterizing such movements, is just as readily applied to Rousseau, Wordsworth, Beethoven, or

Thoreau. Less academically-inclined speakers of English, however, are likely to have a more limited understanding of romantic or Romantic. Beyond images of lost and found loves, those who have taken a high school English literature course may think of a few key titles - "Kubla Khan", "Ode on a Grecian Urn", "Tintern Abbey", and the names Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats.

That the word is so closely associated with these key British poets of the early 19th century is due to literary historians and literary critics of the late 19th century and not to these poets themselves (Abrams, 1981; Whalley, 1972, pp. 157-164).¹ Prior to this, the word, especially in its German *romantisch*, was most closely associated with its more obvious roots of "romance" (implying fantasy) and Romance or Latinate languages. Arguably, it was not until Friedrich Schlegel distinguished romantic poetry from classical poetry that theoretical interest in the concept of Romantic began to grow (Eichner, 1972, p. 104). Historian Hans Eichner describes the growing "currency" of the word in Europe:

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the preoccupation with the romantic spread from Germany to Denmark and Russia, where the term was discussed long before there was any indigenous literature that could conceivably be called romantic, and before long, the nature, merits, and claims of romantic poetry were debated throughout Europe. (Eichner, 1972, p. 7)

¹ Whalley writes: "The poets themselves never applied the term to themselves, nor did their enemies apply it to them" (Whalley, 1972, p. 159).

Although Schlegel was a rough contemporary of the major British Romantic poets, the growing interest in the theoretical applications of the term "Romantic" did not reach England until late in the 19th century (Whalley, 1972, pp. 159-160).

Thus I wish to make it clear that I am using the label Romantic in a very limited way common to scholarship on literary and philosophical history: as the best word we have for a group of writers, artists, and poets of the late 18th and early 19th centuries who shared, on the most general level, certain subject matter interests and a certain philosophical and literary heritage. Close scrutiny of any period distinction in intellectual history usually leads to the collapse of those period distinctions and the generalizations about similarity between the work of individuals within those periods. As we shall see, "Romantic" thinkers were drawing heavily on "Enlightenment" thinkers. What needs to be understood for this investigation is not the essence of Romanticism, but the development of imagination as an educationally important concept in the work of thinkers and writers who are typically labeled as Romantic. Although there are certainly common viewpoints on the imagination among many prominent philosophers and poets of early 19th century, I do not wish to suggest that this, or other, commonalities alone justify distinguishing these thinkers en masse, in any significant way, from Medieval, Enlightenment, or Modern thinkers.

THE EARLY IMAGINATION

The imagination is certainly not a new concept in Western philosophy or psychology even if the word itself is. We find evidence that early Greek, Hebrew, and medieval thinkers were attempting to characterize the power to imagine in their mythic and religious stories. The loss of Eden and “man’s” transgression against God can be read as a warning or account of human imaginative ambition as can the Hellenic story of Prometheus and his theft of fire from Mt. Olympus (Kearney, 1988).

The value attached to the imagination in its earliest forms, however, is ambiguous if not negative. For example, Egan, in his effort to redeem the imagination for modern education, writes that “the imagination in both ancient Greek and Hebrew traditions represents a rebellion against divine order, it disturbs the proper harmony between the human and divine worlds, and it empowers people with a capacity that is properly divine” (Egan, 1992, p. 13).

It is somewhat simplistic to attribute wholly moralistic tones to these early stories. Prometheus, after all, was (for a deity) friend to man.¹ Yet the imagination, seen as that which allows humankind to create, can bring about great good or great ill. Humans, without the divine foresight of the gods, are fallible in their imaginings.

This skepticism about the imagination continues through Plato and the Platonic theologians of the middle ages in which we see Judeo-Christian religious traditions and Hellenistic secular traditions mixing. Just as Plato argued that mind-conjured images and artistic impressions (in so far as they remained in

the realm of *phantasia* or the imagination) tend to mislead us in our search for truth (*episteme*), early Christian theologians would argue that the imagination was a stumbling block in the pure perception of the holy. Richard Kearney writes of St. Augustine, who stands at the beginning of this all-important synthetic tradition:

Augustine was, of course, an influential forerunner of the medieval theories of the imagination. He was the first Latin author to use the term *imagination* in a consistent philosophical manner, combining the biblical distrust of images with the Greek and neo-Platonic view of *phantasia* as a hindrance to spiritual contemplation. (Kearney, 1988, p. 117)

Others would turn toward Aristotle's slightly less negative account of the role *phantasia* plays in memory and argue for a limited positive account of imagination.² Yet excesses in fancy were still seen as a potential cause of serious moral and spiritual transgression³:

In so far as imagination was prepared to enter the humble service of this higher Origin [God] and honour it as the one and only Father

¹ Kearney argues, in his study of the history of the imagination, that Edenic and Promethean stories present the imagination as essential to the human condition. The imagination as the power to transgress is both blessing and curse (Kearney, 1988).

² Thomas Aquinas in particular (Kearney, 1988, pp. 128-130).

³ Although it has been observed that folk tradition differed drastically during "medieval" times in its treatment of imaginative powers (Le Goff, 1986).

of all things, it could be granted probation under the jurisdiction of reason. But as soon as imagination sought to surpass this limited role as a ward of court, it was to be harshly penalized. Leniency in such a case could only lead to idolatry, blasphemy or demonic possession. (Kearney, 1988, p. 131)

Additionally, the power of the imagination was, for medieval thinkers, reproductive and receptive only. Aquinas considered the imagination to be a “storehouse of forms received through the senses” (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, 78, 4). This understanding is, of course, quite distant from modern connotations of the word. “Western” thinking would require a number of great leaps and small hops to begin to break from the influence of Platonic, Aristotelian and Judeo-Christian skepticism about the function of the imagination. It needed to overcome both the passive characterization of the faculty and the negative value attached to it in order to make sense of the imagination as the locus of creative insight and artistic genius.

For the first leap in the development of the modern concept we move forward to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who, at the beginning of his great work of political philosophy, the *Leviathan*, provides the earliest theoretical treatment of the English word “imagination” (Engell, 1981, pp. 12-17). He is careful to place his use of the word in the context of earlier Greek and Roman thinkers. Hobbes explains:

[A]fter the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. And this is it, the Latines call *Imagination*, from the image made in seeing; and apply the same, though improperly, to all the other senses. But the Greeks call it *Fancy*; which signifies *apparence*, and is as proper to one sense, as to another. IMAGINATION therefore is nothing but *decaying sense*; and is found in men, and many other living Creatures, aswell sleeping, as waking. (Hobbes, 1991, p. 15)

Hobbes' primary aim in developing an understanding of the imagination is to explain the workings of the human mind and man in general (which was an important part of his greater goal in the *Leviathan*). The imagination, for Hobbes, explains memory, dreams, and the ability to describe and portray fictions such as the Centaur. He compares the nature of the imagination in the mind to the effect of wind on water. The imagination is that which is roused or agitated by sensation.

It is important to point out this initial passive characterization of the imagination; it firmly places one foot of Hobbes in the Platonic and neo-Platonic traditions of the middle ages. Although Hobbes, in discussing the Centaur, refers to the compounding of images, he avoids at this point characterizing the imagination as a primarily generative power. Indeed, Hobbes' educational recommendation regarding the imagination reflects his desire to show the

relationship between sensory experiences and fancy. Hobbes writes, concerning the belief in Ghosts, Goblins, and other products of the imagination:

If this superstitious fear of Spirits were taken away, and with it, Prognostiques from Dreams, false Prophecies, and many other things depending thereon, by which, crafty ambitious persons abuse the simple people, men would be much more fitted than they are for civill Obedience. And this ought to be the work of the Schooles: but they rather nourish such doctrine. For (not knowing what Imagination, or the Senses are), what they receive, they teach: some saying, that Imaginations rise of themselves, and have no cause: Others that they rise most commonly from the Will; and that Good thoughts are blown (inspired) into a man, by God; and Evill thoughts by the Divell. (Hobbes, 1991, p. 19)

Hobbes' educated imagination is a mind that can distinguish real from unreal; that can see its fancies and dreams as combinations of decaying sense and not reality.

Later, however, Hobbes ascribes a new meaning to the imagination, a meaning that only makes sense as applied to human beings. The sequence or train of thoughts (as individual imaginations), "when it is governed by designe, is nothing but *Seeking*, or the faculty of Invention" (Hobbes, 1991, p. 21).

Although Hobbes confines his use of the term Invention to the "hunting out of the causes, of some effect, present or past; or of the effects, of some present or past cause" we can recognize the beginnings of a very important duality in the imagination. The imagination can be used generatively, beyond the simple superimposition of horse and man images. Furthermore, a well-tempered imagination is one in which the train of thoughts and ideas is governed properly.

James Engell, perhaps slightly exaggerating Hobbes' contribution, writes:

In Hobbes we see a fundamental distinction between two powers of imagination, a distinction that was to pervade English and German thought for at least 175 years. The imagination is responsible for perceptions and ideas, for our "experience" and picture of reality. On a "higher" second level, it produces new pictures and ideas, it fashions new experiences; it adorns and creates; it is the force behind art. By placing emphasis on this second role of imagination, Hobbes "brought the whole creative process indoors." And there it has stayed ever since. (Engell, 1981, p.15, citing Thorpe, 1940, p. 294)

Hobbes does not seem to place such great importance on the generative and artistic capabilities of the imagination, or Invention, as he calls the imagination in its particularly generative mode. Rather, Hobbes sounds more as if he has the original meaning of Prometheus in mind -- fore-thinking. Engell is right, however,

in his observation that Hobbes paved the way for later thinkers. In Hobbes we see the first attempt to describe and explain the inner workings of the human mind in terms that reflect the ability not only to recall images but to invent them.

TURNING INWARD

After Hobbes, we see growing interest in describing the workings of the human mind and the relationship between sense-impressions and ideas. The British empiricist tradition, with its emphasis on understanding the relationship between sensory perception and the formation of ideas, would continue this enterprise through Locke, Berkeley, Hume and others for more than a century. It is not surprising that so many thinkers of that time would devote philosophic energy in the attempt to describe the inner workings of the mind. We sometimes take for granted our capacity, as human beings, to have an idea or even to be able to draw a Pegasus. How is that we can talk about, describe, and envision that which does not exist? Not only are these abilities remarkable in and of themselves, they have been put forward as that which separates humans from animals (an important project for a great many philosophers and theologians), and that which makes us capable of relating to each other as moral beings. As the credibility of divine and diabolic presence in human affairs was challenged during the Enlightenment, it made sense to turn toward the nature of the human being and turn inward toward the new seat of human potential -- the mind.

The concept of mind and its growing role in philosophical endeavors in general spread outward from and eventually past the early empirical philosophy of Hobbes (and later, John Locke). Locke's student, Shaftesbury would draw upon empiricist thinking but give a new twist to the role of the mind in nature. Shaftesbury argued for the pre-eminence of sympathy and association for moral understanding and virtue. For Shaftesbury, our ability to not only feel "with" others but to resonate with nature itself led to complete moral development (Engell, 1981, p. 24). This move to the moral was of the greatest importance to the development of the concept of imagination. German thinkers picked up on this strain of thinking about the imaginative act. Leibniz, influenced by Shaftesbury, explored the relationship between "*vis activa*" or "*la puissance active*" (his terms for imagination), self-consciousness, and identity:

According to Leibniz, self-consciousness, in the broad and positive sense, is an imaginative act. The impact of this concept for Romanticism - and for the modern world, especially romantic and modern literature - cannot be underestimated. It is at once the very stuff of Byron's irony, Wordsworth's sincerity, and Keats' questionings. Leibniz's second theme is that consciousness of self leads directly to the active production of an image of the self, and identity . . . Our identity is a creature of imagination. (Engell, 1981, p. 31)

Nowhere was the Germanic treatment as important for the development of the concept of imagination as in the work of Immanuel Kant. Among his many key contributions to philosophy, Kant can be said to “cap” Enlightenment thought on the imagination and provide the bridge between earlier British and German thinkers and the Romantics. On the one hand Kant had read spiritualistic treatments of the role of the organic and dynamic imagination in sympathy (both with others and the harmony of God’s creation).¹ On the other, he was profoundly influenced by the more “scientific” treatments of the faculty of the imagination in British empirical psychology and in the psychological work of his countryman Joseph Nicolaus Tetens (Engell, 1981, p. 128).

Especially important for later thinkers was Kant’s association of aesthetic judgment with imagination in his *Critique of Judgment*. For Kant, the imagination was instrumental in coupling the faculty of understanding with the subject’s perception of the object. It brings together all the concepts, perceptions, and intuitions involved in making an aesthetic judgment. Even more important was Kant’s observations that the imagination is most easily stimulated by objects such as a crackling fire or babbling brook which do not follow set rules. Kant argues that the imagination thrives on lawlessness, enjoys freedom rather than regularity and containment (Kant, 1952). The link between freedom or “free play” of the imagination and the variety and inherent beauty of nature was to become absolutely essential to later thinkers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

¹ Leibniz and Leibniz’s British forerunner, Shaftesbury, stand out among the most prominent influences in this direction (Engell, 1981, p. 128).

Although Kant provided the theoretical development of the imagination that was to give Coleridge and others the conceptual equipment necessary to argue for its supreme importance in reason, creativity, and sympathy, Kant himself did not stray far from the kinds of specific educational recommendations that Thomas Hobbes had made over 100 years earlier. He wrote:

As to the cultivation of the imagination, the following is to be noticed: - Children generally have a very lively imagination, which does not need to be expanded or made more intense by the reading of fairy tales. It needs rather to be curbed and brought under rule, but at the same time should not be left quite unoccupied. (Kant, 1964, p. 78)

Kant goes on to recommend the use of maps to both focus and discipline the imagination of children. Kant, like Hobbes, wished to draw a hard line between irrational, unconstructive musings and daydreams and the proper education of the faculty of imagination. After Kant, however, this hard line would begin to change.

IMAGINATION TAKES FLIGHT

To see this change, we look from philosophers, empirical philosophy, and faculty psychology to poets and poetics. In particular, we look to the British “Romantics” and to the revolution in aesthetics that they were, more or less independently of one another, trying to accomplish. It is important to understand the literary context of the British Romantic writers and more important not to fall into the trap of over-generalization. There is much variation among the canonical “major” Romantic poets (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, Byron, Keats). Whereas Wordsworth’s interests, for example, lay primarily in natural scenes and self-reflective poetical essays, Blake’s poetry and accompanying etchings were fantastical and religious in nature. Byron’s *Don Juan* shares more with major Neo-classical works than those of his fellow Romantics.

Taken out of the history of European poetics, these poets may seem wildly dissimilar. It is precisely their common literary, historical, and philosophical context, however, that makes discussion about them, as a group, possible and ultimately useful. The poets were both building on and trying to move forward from the common legacy of Shakespeare, Milton, and British neo-classicism. Historically, the writers are united by revolutions in the name of human liberty and the wane of religious justification for the right to rule in Europe as a whole. In his autobiographical epic, *The Prelude*, Wordsworth must reconcile his sympathy with French revolutionary language with the reality of mass slaughter. Blake writes specifically about both the American and French revolutions and Byron took an active role in emancipatory war efforts in Greece. Shelley’s

interest in democracy and freedom permeates his actions, poetry, and prose (Cameron, 1942).

These poets were also aware of the earlier philosophical writings on the imagination, some very much so. Some knew of Shaftesbury and the role of imagination in sympathy and turned a great deal of their poetic attention to it (Engell, 1981). The younger poets (Byron, Shelley, and Keats) were influenced by Wordsworth and Coleridge, especially through the *Lyrical Ballads* and its "Preface" -- a piece in which Wordsworth links the poetic gift, the poetic response, and the poet's craft to the imagination.

Among the British Romantics, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was most explicit in his philosophical treatment of the imagination. The famous passage in his critical work, the *Biographia Literaria*, reads:

The imagination then I consider either as primary, or secondary.

The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a representation in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree, and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still, at all events, it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all

objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead. (Coleridge, 1967, p. 167)

In this passage we can see Coleridge wrestling with the long line of philosophical and psychological treatments of the concept of the imagination. He follows in the path of Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Kant and others in attributing both an active and passive function to the imagination. Coleridge's primary imagination is a basic element of human perception -- it takes sensory impressions and "assembles" them into perceivable wholes. The secondary imagination, however, is under conscious control. It is the purposeful re-arrangement of impressions and ideas into meaningful wholes. For Coleridge, this secondary, creative power of the imagination was essential to the poetic enterprise (Bowra, 1950, p. 4).

Coleridge also associated the creative imagination with kinds of poetic acts. After presenting his formulation of the primary and secondary imagination, he comments:

Whatever more than this I shall think it fit to declare concerning the powers and privileges of the imagination in the present work will be found in the critical essay on the uses of the supernatural in poetry and the principles that regulate its introduction: which the reader will find prefixed to the poem of *The Ancient Mariner*. (Coleridge, 1967, p. 167)

We must forever wonder what exactly Coleridge had to say about the supernatural in poetry and the imagination -- he never wrote this promised essay. But his poetic efforts alone show us that he had at least departed if not broken from the views of Hobbes and Kant. Whereas both these philosophers are skeptical if not hostile to the fantastical in literature, Coleridge's most famous works ("Kubla Khan", *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*) are rich in fantastical imagery.

Coleridge's interest in fancy as well as his strong theoretical conviction that the imagination was the seat of all creative thought also led him to argue that education and the development of mind must proceed from within rather than being imposed from without (Berthoff, 1990, p. 58). For Coleridge, the mind unfettered was the mind capable of discovering, willing, and creating freedom.

It is not in Coleridge, however, but in his off-and-on-again friend and poetic associate William Wordsworth that we see the most direct expression of the imagination in terms that can be rendered educationally meaningful.¹ His *Prelude* is subtitled "Growth of a Poet's Mind" and the self-proclaimed "theme" of the poem is the imagination. Wordsworth writes, near the end of his master-work:

. . . Imagination, which in truth
Is but another name for absolute power

¹ Although it can certainly be argued that Wordsworth's treatment of the imagination was heavily influenced by Coleridge.

And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
And reason, in her most exalted mood.
This faculty hath been the feeding source
Of our long labor . . . (lines 189-194).

An encompassing examination of *The Prelude* and the place of the imagination therein would require another investigation altogether and is far beyond the scope of this work. We can note, however, some features of the Wordsworthian imagination and its development. Unlike the Platonic *phantasia*, it is not enemy to reason. Indeed, it is the finest expression of reason. As with Coleridge's secondary imagination, Wordsworth's creative faculty unites and brings parts together into wholes. The poet even frowns upon the analytic: "that false secondary power/by which we multiply distinctions, then/Deem that our puny boundaries are things/That we perceive, and not that we have made" (*Prelude*, lines 216-217).

Incorporating a particularly Shaftesburian flavor, Wordsworth emphasizes the sympathetic agency of the imagination. Time and again in the *Prelude*, Wordsworth recalls moments in his life in which he felt a powerful resonance with nature. For Wordsworth, these moments are the nectar of the poet. In the Conclusion to the *Prelude*, Wordsworth describes himself standing on Mount Snowdon at early morning, watching the sunrise. The scene provides the poet with a powerful metaphor for the human mind, but it also illustrates the proper engagement of the sympathetic function of the imagination. The imagination is

fed with the sublime; it creates the beautiful (poetry, in this case) from the beautiful. While Wordsworth does have some fond recollections of formal schooling, the *imagination*, for Wordsworth, is best given play among the hills, mountains, and lakes and not the classroom.

Percy Bysshe Shelley would follow upon Wordsworth's subordination of the analytic to the imagination and attribute near-divine stature to the latter (Shelley, 1977, p. 480). But he also provides educational footing beyond Wordsworth's celebration of nature. His idealism permeates all realms of human life -- social, political, and moral, and the place of poetry is supreme in the care and feeding of the imagination. He writes:

A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is the imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause. Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight, which have the power of attracting and assimilating to their own nature all other thoughts, and which form new intervals and interstices whose void for ever craves fresh food. Poetry strengthens that faculty which is organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb. (Shelley, 1977, p. 488)

Shelley is not speaking metaphorically about the muscular nature of the imagination. He has no other way to describe it. In fact, all the language of the past centuries leading up to Shelley's penning of these words in 1821 made this conclusion almost inescapable. It is this move that allows Shelley the room to argue for the training or education of the imagination without, in the first place, arguing that the only proper education of the imagination is to bring it under control, or, in the second place, arguing that only nature could provide its proper education. Poetry, and, we might add, all creative enterprises are imagination-building both in their creation and also in their reception and appreciation.

CONCLUSION

The imagination, as fully articulated by Romantic thinkers, was ripe for educational development. As "reason in its most exalted mode" it formed ideas from simple sensations. It fueled the capacity for empathy and thus provided a basis for moral perception and reasoning. It was the power to dream. The imagination liberated the self and, through the force of its visions, could liberate others. Terry Eagleton observes of the meaning given to acts of imaginative creation by the Romantics: "Its task is to transform society in the name of those energies and values which art embodies. Most of the Romantic poets were themselves political activists, perceiving continuity between their literary and social commitments" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 20). The Romantics used the concept

of the imagination to position themselves against tradition, whether political, moral, or aesthetic.

For this investigation, three educationally-important facets of the concept of the imagination itself were raised to prominence by the Romantics: 1) that the imagination is a part of the mind with a particular role and function, 2) that the imagination is the seat of the creative power of the mind, 3) that the imagination, through its sympathetic urges, is properly nurtured and developed by the appreciation of beauty (both natural and created) and the creation of works of beauty.

It is this third facet that marks the greatest change in the concept of the imagination from pre-Romantic to Romantic thought. While Coleridge and other Romantic writers played with the fantastical in ways that went beyond the simple recasting of Greek and Roman myth, Kant was expressly against the use of fanciful tales in the education of the imagination. Hobbes, in a passage that reverberates forward two centuries, wrote in what can only be taken as a dismissive tone:

So when a man compoundeth the image of his own person, with the image of the actions of an other man; as when a man imagins himselfe a *Hercules*, or an *Alexander*, (which happeneth often to them that are much taken with reading of Romants) it is a compounded imagination, and properly but a Fiction of the mind.
(Hobbes, 1991, p. 16)

In the Romantics, however, we see a double-movement that pushes past the boundaries of Hobbes' rationalism. "Romantic" writers and thinkers from Goethe to Blake turned attention inward and celebrated dreams, fancies, visions, and other "fictions of the mind." Furthermore, they prized and honored the *expression* of those dreams, fancies, visions and mental fictions in works of art as the full embodiment of human imagination. Art had shaken the chains of Platonism and was no longer an imperfect *mimesis* but an expression of individuality.

The association of imagination with individuality and personal freedom is the most important legacy of Romantic cultivation of the concept of imagination for education and perhaps for modern society in general.¹ Forest Pyle, making use of the Marxist concept of ideology, argues that the ideology of the imagination served, for the Romantics, a political and social purpose as well as a poetic and philosophical one (Pyle, 1995). Against the backdrop of the imagination, Byron's heroes shook their fists at the world, Blake envisioned a world without poverty, and Mary Wollstonecraft wrote her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Imagination became something not to curb and control (things relatively easy to do educationally-speaking) but something to express, engender, and liberate (things perhaps slightly more difficult to do in the process of education). The imagination, to use an appropriately Romantic metaphor,

¹ In his *Sources of the Self*, Charles Taylor writes: "The idea of the creative imagination, as it sprang up in the Romantic era, is still central to modern culture. The conception is still alive among us of art - of literature, in the first place, and especially of poetry - as a creation which reveals, or as a revelation which at the same time defines and completes what makes it manifest" (Taylor, 1989, p. 419).

needed to be cultivated. It needed to grow, to develop. That which inhibited the imagination, logically enough, was to be devalued and that which gave it free play was to be cherished. Indeed, in the spiritualism of William Blake (for whom the imagination was a form of the divine) limiting the imagination would be close to sin (Bowra, 1950, pp. 3-4).

Literary critic C.M. Bowra observes of the relationship between imagination and self-expression in the Romantic poets:

[The] belief in the imagination was part of the contemporary belief in the individual self. The poets were conscious of a wonderful capacity to create imaginary worlds, and they could not believe that this was idle or false. On the contrary, they thought that to curb it was to deny something vitally necessary to their whole being. They thought that it was just this which made them poets, and that in their exercise of it they could do far better than other poets who sacrificed it to caution and common sense. (Bowra, 1950, pp. 1-2)

It is easy to see why the imagination that emerged from the Romantic period was a goldmine for subsequent educators and education reformers. Swinging on the hinge of the imagination, arguments were almost ready-made for the inclusion of expressive activities and new modes of learned “sensitivity” in the curriculum. In the next chapter, we shall investigate how the Romantic imagination was taken up by educators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

and used to provide critical, although not unproblematic, leverage for reformist educational movements -- movements which, in their massive influence, continue to saturate the language of modern education practices.

Chapter Two: The Liberation of the *Schooled* Imagination

As we move ahead, from the grand scale of Romanticism toward the context of modern educational theory and schooling practices and toward our ultimate goal of passing judgment on the educational value of the imagination, we must resist the temptation to represent the history of the concept of the imagination as a linear narrative. Although I do intend this investigation to be an account of the development and changes in the use of the concept in educational thinking, it cannot give a strict genealogy of its current use. While we can discuss and occasionally isolate actual trends in language use, we usually must rely on how privileged speakers and writers (published authors and noted speakers) used a word. We may know how Coleridge or Kant conceptualized the imagination but we can say very little about how their next-door neighbors did, much less classroom teachers in the context of education of their day.

We begin to turn, then, from philosophers and poets to educational writers and educational theorists who, in various ways, reaped the crop sown by the Romantics. We turn, bearing in mind the above caveat, not to a point downstream in the history of the imagination, but to a confluence of a number of philosophical, psychological, and aesthetic streams -- a confluence typical of thinking in education.

The revolutionary educational theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi and Friedrich Froebel was deeply informed by both French and German Romanticism in its emphasis on the nature of the child and student self-realization. Education reformers and theorists who followed, both in Europe and North America, would build upon but also respond to the educational implications of numerous strands in Romantic thought -- from the naturalism of Rousseau to the poetic sensibility of Wordsworth.

The importance of the creative imagination was obvious to post-Romantic educators as the seat of *possibility* in the Romantic understanding of mind. The idea of a mind, generative and active and not simply a book in which the *magister* writes valued knowledge, served as the perfect vehicle for the spiritual, social, and moral arguments of a number of education theorists. These arguments, we shall see, challenged not only the traditional pedagogy of rote learning and recitation but also assumptions about childhood, Nature, self, and society.

There is, however, a basic tension in the importation of the Romantic imagination into the context of education. In Wordsworth's *Prelude* I noted the value of imagination in the growth of the mind. Wordsworth's imagination is painted on the canvas of the solitary thinker, journeying to Mount Snowdon for the sunrise. The Romantic imagination, associated with the poetic and aesthetic, contains an assertion of irrepressible individuality. To educate the imagination and liberate the student's mind while at the same time keeping the

bodies of young children all in the same place was, and still is, a formidable challenge for education reformers.

The movement from the Romantic roots of imagination to the classroom is characterized by efforts to “fit” the creative imagination into the language of schooling. This fit requires a good bit of alteration on the part of would-be tailors. In the history of the concept in education, it required a gradual but distinctive move away from the poetic “power” of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, and Romanticism to a mental faculty or ability over which the teacher could exercise direction and constructive control. Education reformers would have to incorporate the liberatory, expressivistic vision of the Romantics into educational practice without reverting to the restrictive educational recommendations of Hobbes or Kant. Wordsworth left the education of the imagination largely to Nature. Educators needed to go further. They needed to assert the educational value of the imagination in the discourse of school policy.

EARLY EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVES AND THE ACTIVE MIND

During the same period in which the British Romantic poets were celebrating the power of the imagination, a few Continental thinkers were starting a movement that would revolutionize schooling in both Europe and North America. Following the lead of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a titanic figure in European Romantic thought, such foundational educational theorists as

Pestalozzi and Froebel shifted the focus in education from key texts and rote learning to the child and child development.

Rousseau himself was skeptical if not hostile to the imagination and fancy, perhaps realizing that it would be difficult to lead Emile, his fictitious pupil and the subject of his greatest work, to a life of moderation informed by direct sensory experience if one also encouraged flights of fancy. On a number of occasions in the *Emile*, Rousseau expresses the need to check the imagination (Rousseau, 1961). He writes, “The world of reality has its bounds, the world of imagination is boundless; as we cannot enlarge the one, let us restrict the other; for all the sufferings which really make us miserable arise from the difference between the real and imaginary” (Rousseau, 1961, p. 45).

The Platonic influence in Rousseau’s work is evident in his skepticism about the imagination although it is quite possible that Rousseau also was influenced by John Locke’s characteristically empiricist downplaying of the illusory nature of the imagination (Engell, 1981, p. 18) .¹ Just as Plato holds that *phantasia* interferes with true perception, Rousseau believed that the imaginary is one-step removed from real, direct experience with Nature. Rousseau, however, places a great deal more emphasis on contact with Nature than did Plato. Indeed, Plato argues that as our senses can mislead us in judgment, they are also one step removed from a pure apprehension of the ideal forms of existence.

¹ Rousseau, in a famous passage, recommends to the reader: “If you wish to know what is meant by public education, read Plato’s *Republic*. Those who merely judge books by their titles take this for a treatise on politics, but it is the finest treatise on education ever written” (Rousseau, 1961, p. 8).

How Rousseau handles the relationship between the child and Nature provides room for later educational theorists to emphasize the importance of the creative imagination. Rousseau, like Immanuel Kant, stands at the border between Enlightenment thought and Romanticism. Although skeptical of the creative "imagination" (as the word was understood by such philosophers as Hobbes and Locke), he benefits from the shift in late Enlightenment thinking that fundamentally changed the understanding of mind: where mind was once passive and receptive only, it now was active and generative. Rousseau, consequently, stresses the unfolding of the child's inner nature -- especially the ways in which the child grows and matures in response to his experiences. The educator's first duty, according to Rousseau, is to carefully study the child so as to become sensitive to his inner nature. "Oh, wise man, take time to observe nature; watch your scholar well before you say a word to him; first leave the germ of his character free to show itself, do not constrain him in anything, the better to see him as he really is," preaches Rousseau (1961, p. 58).

A number of educators took Rousseau's recommendation to heart.¹ They saw, in the growing strength of Romantic conceptions of mind, Nature, and the relationship between the two, an opportunity to make persuasive cases for educational and, consequently, social reform. Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) is often described as the first and most important educator to follow Rousseau's child-focused curriculum, although he was certainly not a slavish devotee (Curtis & Boulton, 1964; Noll & Kelly, 1970, p. 182; Nakosteen, 1965,

¹ Included among those whom Rousseau influenced is also Wordsworth himself although there is disagreement about the extent to which Wordsworth parts company with Rousseau.

p. 333). Dissatisfied with the methods of rote-learning and hard discipline that were commonplace in his time, Pestalozzi strove for social reform through an education of the individual child -- an education respectful of the child's own nature and constantly attentive to his or her natural development (Heafford, 1967).¹

Pestalozzi took seriously Rousseau's admonition to fit the education to the child's nature and the child's development as a *child* (Nakosteen, 1965, p. 334). Yet Pestalozzi also took from Locke, Kant, Goethe and others. He was, in many ways, neck-deep in the same ideas that influenced Coleridge, Wordsworth, and the other British Romantics. He was especially influenced, in his understanding of the imagination, by his personal friend Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Fichte gave the highest importance to the imagination and its relationship to self-realization and freedom in his philosophical work and extended his philosophy to the realm of education (Engell, 1981; Nakosteen, 1965). The imagination (*Einbildungskraft*), for Fichte, was the agency by which the mind and self (*Ich*) relates to the world (Engell, 1981, pp. 225-231).

Pestalozzi seized upon this understanding of the imagination, although he would conceive of it predominantly within the vague and complex meaning of *anschauung* -- a concept sometimes indicating sense-impressions alone but also the combination of those sense-impressions and the formation of ideas.² The

¹ Concerning the way in which Pestalozzi expanded the ameliorative potential of Rousseauian education theory, J.A. Green writes: "Pestalozzi was as profoundly convinced of the rottenness of society as Rousseau, but more clearly, or at any rate more consistently, than Rousseau, perhaps, he saw salvation in education promoted by the state" (Green, 1912, p. 6).

² Although English translators in the late 19th century would readily translate Pestalozzi's fuzzy use of *anschauung* as imagination.

importance of sense-impressions and their constructive relationship to ideas through the syncretic power of the mind stands at the heart of Pestalozzi's theory of education. In 1801, a year in which Wordsworth was busily working away on *The Prelude* and two years after he and Coleridge had made an academic pilgrimage to Germany, Pestalozzi wrote:

[A]ll knowledge flows from three primary powers:

1. From the power of making sounds, the origin of language.
2. From the *indefinite, simple sensuous-power of forming images*, out of which arise the consciousness of all forms.
3. From the *definite*, no longer merely *sensuous-power of imagination*, from which must be derived consciousness of unity, and with it the power of calculation and arithmetic. (Pestalozzi, 1898, p. 148)

Pestalozzi, like Coleridge (who was also influenced by Fichte's treatment of the imagination), sees the imagination as the power by which images received through the senses were combined to form unified wholes -- ideas and concepts. It is this power-in-the-mind that Pestalozzi found so important for education. For Pestalozzi, the Romantic understanding of the imagination was understood as an accurate empirical representation of the mind-at-work. He observes:

I long sought for a common psychological origin for all these arts of instruction, because I was convinced that only through this might it be possible to discover the *form* in which the cultivating of mankind is determined through the very laws of Nature itself. It is evident this form is founded on the general organization of the mind, by means of which our understanding binds together in imagination the impressions which are received by the senses from Nature into a whole, that is into an idea, and gradually unfolds this idea clearly. (Pestalozzi, 1898, p. 142)

Pestalozzi's methods are an expression of these theoretical convictions. He advises that children measure, draw, and write in order to solidify the growing power in the child to turn sense-impressions into ideas and forms (Pestalozzi, 1898, pp. 183-200). He also stresses the importance of self-knowledge (achieved through a gradual sophistication of the mind and its powers), especially in regard to the child learning to love and worship Nature and God. Pestalozzi, in his later work on his method, writes, "Self-knowledge, then, is the center from which all human instruction must start" (Pestalozzi, 1989, p. 334).

Pestalozzi was well within the Enlightenment tradition which held that the most important "function" of the imagination was its ability to combine impressions into ideas. His interest in self-knowledge, self-activity, and the importance of the child's freedom in education lays new ground in educational thinking, however; new ground not just for education but for the understanding of

the educated imagination. By freeing the mind to follow the course of Nature, one can help the student toward self-realization, reason, and a moral life (Curtis & Boulton, 1964, pp. 340-341). When it comes to educating the imagination (or the power which combines *anschauung* -- sense-impressions -- into ideas), the teacher must direct through non-direction. Curtis and Boulton, in their *A Short History of Educational Ideas*, describe the task of the Pestalozzian educator with the appropriate organic metaphor:

[It] is not to put knowledge or reasoning power into the pupil, but to provide the best conditions for his full development -- to tend him as a gardener tends a plant, removing noxious weeds from his vicinity, and supplying healthy, fertile soil and the right degrees of sun, water, and shelter. In fact, the pupil develops himself through self-activity. (Curtis and Boulton, 1964, p. 341)

This aspect of Pestalozzian thought, taken up especially by his student Froebel, is of great importance in the history of progressive education. It also increases the degree of tension between the free mind of the child and the structured process of education. The trick of letting the child go free to discover, inquire, and realize his or her own "inner nature" was no less problematic in Pestalozzi as it is was in the "open schools" era of the 1960's or in the activity-center model of many contemporary primary classrooms. The celebration of the creative imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in Fichte does not sit so easily with Rousseau's

admonition to limit its roving through physical exercise and attention to what is in front of the senses.

Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), usually remembered as the "father" of kindergarten, adds a strain of mysticism to his mentor's more psychological work and raises the stakes in the effort to liberate the mind of the child. Froebel's mysticism, with roots in the spiritualistic philosophy of Fichte as well as Schelling, took the importance of self and self-awareness to new heights. In *The Education of Man*, Froebel writes, "Education consists in leading man, as a thinking, intelligent being, growing in self-consciousness, to a pure and unsullied, conscious and free representation of the inner law of Divine Unity, and in teaching him ways and means thereto" (Froebel, 1887, p. 2).

Froebel's pedagogy follows from his conviction that self-understanding comes only through voluntary self-awareness and individual growth. He argues that children must be given room to develop and grow at Nature's own pace -- in the same way as all living things. Education "should necessarily be passive, following (only guarding and protecting), not prescriptive, categorical, interfering" (Froebel, 1887, p.198). For Froebel, children must be left to play and express their inner nature as freely as possible. Creative expression was, in Froebel's system, the means by which the mind is properly exercised (Bowen, 1899, p. 129-130). Historian of education Medhi Nakosteen writes:

False education, claimed Froebel, is education imposed from outside. True education is education initiated from within. A free

growth of the child's own essence is the only aim of education. To promote this, an environment for free development should be set up as early as possible -- hence the kindergarten. (Nakosteen, 1965, p. 357)¹

Froebel's confidence in the free development of inner nature in education springs directly from similar confidence in the power of the mind to overcome division between self and Nature, between mind and God. As it was in Fichte, and even to a greater extent in Schelling, the creative imagination or *Einbildungskraft* offered the possibility of redemption and self-realization (Engell, 1981). As the Nature of the mind of man related to the Nature of the divine, self-realization was akin to the realization of the divine within man.

Froebel's faith in the child and the power of the mind to make whole the basic separations of human existence went far beyond the educational thinking of Rousseau. Whereas in Rousseau we see the primacy of sense-experience and contact with Nature, we see in Froebel (and in Fichte) a dramatic rise in the importance of the individual mind; a rise that may indeed place the importance of the creative imagination and the self over the importance of Nature. Indeed, Coleridge would criticize Fichte for egoism in his account of the imagination (Engell, 1981, p. 225). Likewise, we find the problem of how to educate for this kind of spiritual self-realization made even more difficult to resolve. How does a teacher, with a classroom of students, direct without directing? How do we teach

¹ The term "kindergarten" or child-garden resonates with the organicism of Romantic thought.

students (with an emphasis on the plural) while at the same time freeing individuals to find God?

For Pestalozzi and Froebel, the answer to the great question “how to educate” was provided in the emerging Romantic understanding of mind and the creative imagination in particular. The generative power in the mind, long held in chains by the controlling, directing tactics of traditional education, must be set free to discover its own nature and the Nature of the divine. The imagination, as a freedom within the mind, demanded an education that gave students as much outward freedom as possible. Education must approximate the “natural scene” of wandering in the countryside as much as possible. True self-awareness, individuality, and expression came only from the consciousness discovered through freedom and free play.

As a revolutionizing response to traditional schooling practices, the “new” education of Froebel and Pestalozzi was built on strong contrasts to old ways of thinking about mind, education, and society. It was built on the hopes of personal freedom, self-realization, and social transformation that so excited Romantic thinkers. Pestalozzi, especially, was committed to social justice and amelioration of social ills (Downs, 1975, pp. 92-93; Green, 1969). These hopes, especially when incorporated into educational practice, did not always fit well with what many had come to expect and what many still expect from schooling: discipline, character training, and the acquisition of knowledge.

Making use of the Romantic understanding of mind, early progressive thinking opposed the passivity of traditional educational practices with a mind

fully active and a mind in *need* of freedom. Pestalozzi and Froebel challenged not only the value of traditional knowledge (especially the study of classics and classical languages) but also the idea that education should have an essentially conservative nature. Kindergarten was not, at the time, an innocent innovation meant to provide state-subsidized daycare. It was a radicalizing move toward individualism and self-knowledge.

Early progressive theory and practice was a cultural thrown-gauntlet. It is no wonder that Pestalozzi and Froebel would encounter political resistance. Pestalozzi's experimental schools were by no means a history of success stories -- internal squabbles at his schools and negative criticism by governmental reviewers prevented Pestalozzi from ever seeing in his lifetime widespread public implementation of his methods (Heafford, 1967). Froebel's fate was even worse. Although quite possibly the result of a confusion between his writings and those of his more radical uncle (who was, among other things, in favor of women's emancipation), Froebel was denounced by the Prussian minister of education and religion as atheistic -- a serious blow given his spiritual idealism (Bowen, 1899, p. 41).

It is likely that neither reformer went to the grave with a feeling of great success in the public (and governmental) eye. It is not hard to imagine that both would feel at home, and probably also discouraged, if resurrected in the midst of arguments about whole language vs. phonics, "child-centered" vs. "back-to-basics", and the host of other divisions characteristic of contemporary public

education. We are still hashing out the same conflicts between education for the individual, creative mind and education for discipline and control.

Pestalozzi and Froebel were the first educational theorists to incorporate the Romantic understanding of the imagination into the realm of the school. They were also the first to give it status and meaning as an educational *object*, that is, as a mental attribute that could be improved and developed. Hobbes, Kant, and Rousseau, of course, thought that education had a role to play in the education of the imagination but it was a role that called for containment and control of impulse and imagination. Pestalozzi and Froebel, however, advanced an understanding of the child's mind that called for the loosening of control and discipline in order to expand upon and free the creative ability of the child. The development of the powers of the imagination through an education that allowed for free play was the key to the educational benefits of individuality, self-knowledge, knowledge of the divine, and morality.

THE NEW EDUCATION COMES TO THE NEW WORLD

North American education reformers saw the enormous potential of the theory and practice of European education thinkers. The liberatory pedagogy of Pestalozzi and Froebel blended well with other aspects of Romantic thinking that had already weathered the journey across the Atlantic. Ralph Waldo Emerson had become a major conduit for European Romantic thought -- thought which included at its heart various forms of the Romantic imagination. In his essay

"Education," Emerson advised teachers to respect the child and allow the child the freedom necessary for self-discovery through an awareness of one's own mind (Karier, 1990, p.96).¹

The use to which North American education thinkers would put the creative imagination was similar to, but also importantly different from, that of the Europeans. Like Pestalozzi and Froebel, North American thinkers found in the imagination the means to argue for socially transformative educational practices that lifted the restraining and authoritarian methods of pedagogical traditionalism. Yet they also had the burden of a half-century of "advances" in psychology and natural science. Reformers such as Colonel Francis Wayland Parker -- whose writings I shall look at in this section -- needed their talk about the imagination to make practical, educational sense. Parker needed to make specific curricular suggestions and have those suggestions carry psychological, scientific, and educative authority. He needed to *curricularize* the imagination and, in part, secularize the lofty vision of the European theorists.

In a series edited by William T. Harris, prominent education leader and one-time United States Commissioner of Education, James Hughes (credited as Inspector of Schools, Toronto) presents *Froebel's Educational Laws for All Teachers*. He observes regarding the education of the imagination:

¹ Among the multitude of teachers and scholars whom Emerson influenced are a few prominent proponents of educational change in America: William James (who was himself also influenced by Wordsworth), arguably the founder of American experimental psychology; James' student G. Stanley Hall, founder of the American Psychological Association and a number of journals in the fields of applied psychology; and John Dewey, whose long shadow stretches across almost every aspect of modern educational practices (Goodman, 1990; Karier, 1990).

The objects and processes of Nature are, in Froebel's opinion, the best agencies for the development of the imagination. They supply the greatest variety of elements for the imagination to use, and they stimulate the child's creative faculty in many lines of work, laying the foundation for constructive imagery in maturity in artistic, scientific, mathematical, literary, and ethical work. (Hughes, 1897, pp. 187-188)

Froebel's key to the development of the imagination, Hughes writes, is in its use, its exercise: "Man should be a creative being. Creative powers grows as all other powers grow -- by free use." (Hughes, 1897, p. 107).

There is an unmistakably how-to element in Hughes' recommendations, the calm confidence of a school inspector. In Hughes, as in the theory and practice of other North American early progressive educators, we see an all-important step in the history of the imagination in education. We see the English word "imagination" used in talk about *schooling*. I emphasize "schooling" because we have seen the importance Wordsworth, Shelley, and Coleridge placed on the imagination in the development of mind. But here the word and concept of "imagination" is made to fit inside the idea of formal schooling -- not as something needing control but as something needing expression and use. We see the accommodation of the Romantic imagination in a classroom contained by chalk-board walls and filled with desks, notebooks, and students who are required by law to attend.

Perhaps the greatest champion of the Romantic imagination among those who would define the “progressive” movement is the man John Dewey would call the “father of progressive education”: Colonel Francis W. Parker (Cremin, 1969, p. 129). There is almost a mythic air about Colonel Parker. He was an everyday rural schoolteacher, a Civil War hero, an accomplished artist, a competent administrator, and an insightful educational theorist. By all reports, he was also an educator who cared deeply for students (Cremin, 1969, pp. 128-135). He was respected by numerous influential educators of the day. In the back of the 1893 edition of his *Talks on Teaching* are collected letters praising Parker and mourning his death. Among the collection are letters from Dewey, G. Stanley Hall, William T. Harris (then United States Commissioner of Education), and a number of journal editors and school administrators.

Parker’s work in Quincy, Massachusetts in the 1870s moved him into the national spotlight. Parker, applying pedagogical techniques and theory that he had encountered during a two year visit to Europe, revitalized a school system plagued by literacy deficiencies and dryness of content: “In place of time-honored texts, magazines, newspapers, and materials devised by the teachers themselves were introduced into the classroom. Arithmetic was approached inductively, through objects rather than rules, while geography began with a series of trips over the local countryside” (Cremin, 1969, p. 130). After Parker left Quincy, he continued his work at the Cook County Normal School in Chicago and passed on his pedagogy and passion for learning to countless disciples.

What was it that Parker had seen in Europe? He had read Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart and most likely other British and German Romantics including Rousseau and Wordsworth (Korzenik, 1990, p. 147). He had also seen first hand the application of the new educational practices in Continental schools (Cremin, 1969, p. 129). Indeed, Parker insisted (especially to his skeptical detractors) that his educational "innovations" were a result of proven principles and laws of child development and inner nature -- certainly referring to the work of the European educational theorists he had studied (Cremin, 1969, p. 130; Parker, 1893, appendix p. 13).

Parker's own use of ideas developed by Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart went beyond mere copying, however. Parker's interest in art and artistic expression led him to concentrate on visual learning, images, artistic expression, and the imagination. Parker, following Pestalozzi and Froebel, argued for a curriculum which would foster the "natural" development of the child's mind -- the end of education was an enlargement of self, not simply the knowledge or skills acquired.¹

Imagination played a central role in Parker's understanding of the relationship between the curriculum and inner growth. The imagination, as the

¹ Parker gave high praise to Froebel in particular. He wrote: "Froebel announced the true end and aim of all our work -- the harmonious growth of the whole being. This is the central point. Every act, thought, plan, method, and question should lead to this. Knowledge and skill are simply the means, and not the end, and these are to work toward the symmetrical upbuilding of the whole being. Another name for this symmetrical upbuilding is character, which should be the end and aim of all education. There are two factors in this process: first, the inborn, inherited powers of the mind; and, second, the environment of the mind, which embraces, so far as the teacher is concerned, the subjects taught. The subjects taught, then, are the means of mental development. To aid in the mind's development the teacher must know, first, the means of mental and moral growth, which are found in the subjects taught; and, second, the mental laws by which alone these means can be applied. Knowing the mind and the means, he can work toward the end, which is growth" (Parker, 1893, pp. 18-20).

seat of all creative ability in the mind, needed proper care and feeding. To nourish the imagination one needed to "attend" rigorously to new sensory experiences and, after giving time for assimilation of those experiences into the mind, make use of them in creative expression:

Parker saw education as essentially two processes: attention and expression. Attention was an act of the senses and the mind. Ideas came from looking, listening, smelling, tasting and touching. Attention was an act of will inhibiting all "foreign" activities from consciousness. By attending, one held the associations and made new connections. In this way, the self becomes active and, to use Parker's word, "imaginative." Parker saw the effect of attending as stimulating "intense acts of imagination". (Korzenik, 1990, p. 145, citing Parker, 1884, p. 161)

Parker's thoughts concerning moral and religious education echo Froebel's mysticism but bring the concept of imagination (as expressed in English) strikingly close to modern use -- especially as we see it in debates about modern media and children's exposure to violence, sexuality, and improper language through music and television. Parker writes:

Primary education consists, as I have repeatedly tried to show, in the development of the power of attention: and it will be plain to all

that the selection of objects of thought and attention is a matter of highest importance. The things presented must be pure, good, and beautiful, for that to which we attend comes into the heart, and forms the basis of all our thinking and *imagination* [emphasis mine]. . . The study of the thoughts of God in nature, filling the mind, as it does, with things of beauty, prepares the imagination for clear and strong conceptions of the higher spiritual life. (Parker, 1893, p. 174)

The teacher must shield the child from wickedness and lies so that he or she grows with the truth and the good inside -- a basic tenet of both Rousseau's education for Emile and Plato's education for potential rulers of the ideal society. Yet when we combine this understanding of the imagination with Parker's faith in the importance of artistic expression, we see him move into new, thoroughly Romantic territory. Of art, Parker writes, "The teaching of art is in its infancy; when it comes into its own and is used to reinforce and intensify the highest thought of the soul, its pre-eminence as a means of education will be no longer a matter of doubt" (Parker, 1894, p. 240).

The imagination, fed with the beautiful, produces the beautiful; a position common to a number of the German philosophers -- Fichte and Schelling in particular -- as well as in Coleridge, Wordsworth and Parker himself. Parker's celebration of artistic expression, combined with his focus on the power of attention has led Diana Korzenik, an art education scholar to comment: "Parker's

theory was based on a single metaphor. The learning child was the working artist” (Korzenik, 1990, p. 146).

Parker, although “father” of progressivism, stands firmly in the 19th century. He did not live to see the first World War nor the runaway industrialization of the first decades of the 20th century. It is probably not fair to call Parker simply a conduit or mouthpiece for European Romantic education reformers, since he obviously brought a strong mind and boundless energy to his own educational reform efforts. At the same time, however, his thoughts do not go very far beyond those of Pestalozzi, Froebel, or Herbart. Parker is a Romantic and his imagination is the Romantic imagination.

Parker began the movement, however, to make it educationally respectable and perhaps even necessary to talk of the place of the imagination in the classroom. Parker saw the opportunity to stimulate the power of the imagination, a power which contributed to both self-knowledge and moral and spiritual goodness, with controllable, purchasable, curricular materials -- especially art and craft. The *justification* for changing the curriculum to include art and artistic creation, for Parker, involved the Romantic understanding of the imagination. Parker not only established a place for the imagination in education discourse but began to make specific curricular arguments with the concept. In the next section (Chapters 3 and 4) we shall look at others who followed Parker in developing the educational significance of the creative imagination.¹

¹ I shall also look specifically at how John Dewey wished to understand the concept of the imagination. Dewey, unlike Parker, departs in significant ways from the Romantic understanding of the imagination in education discourse.

MONTESSORI AND THE EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM DEFINED

The spread of the Romantic conception of imagination into education thought was not limited to North American “progressive” reformers such as Parker. We find, in the work of Maria Montessori, the tension between freedom and control inherent in the importation of the Romantic imagination into the classroom.¹ We also find the concept of the imagination fundamentally turned into an *educational object* in Montessori’s educational theory. Montessori makes the education of the imagination a vehicle for successful educational practice. The imagination is no longer an end in itself, organic and world-inventing, but a pedagogical tool. This move toward instrumentality is a move away from the deliberate ideological positioning that lay at the core of the Romantic use of the concept of the imagination. It is, I wish to argue, an inevitable move if we wish to use the concept of the imagination as an object of educational development.

Montessori’s treatment of the imagination parallels her understanding of discipline and education. She is at once Romantic in the spirit of Pestalozzi, Froebel, or Wordsworth and non-Romantic. Montessori was very likely influenced by the Rousseau-Pestalozzi-Froebel legacy, and makes reference to Wordsworth in her writings although her ideas cannot be easily fit into the

¹ Montessori is an educator and educational theorist whose work and ideas have suffered the buffeting treatment of many women thinkers. Although she was writing and speaking about her pedagogical system in the first two decades of the 20th century, her ideas certainly did not impact North America fully until much later in the century and they continue to be “discovered” today (Noll, 1970, p. 287). This is probably directly attributable to William Heard Kilpatrick’s negative critique of her work in his book *The Montessori System Examined* prior to which she enjoyed a warm reception in the United States (Lillard, 1972, pp. 9-15; Kilpatrick, 1914).

"Romantic" tradition (Martin, 1990, p. 159-160). What distinguishes her from Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel is partly her emphasis on the social character of the *Casa dei Bambini*, as Jane Roland Martin argues, but also her downplaying of the free expression of the imagination (Martin, 1990).

Sounding much like Immanuel Kant in his recommendation to use maps to set order to the wild fancies of the child, Montessori argues: "[T]he imagination has need of support. It needs to be built, organized." She continues, however, to remark in true Romantic fashion: "Only then may man attain a new level. He is penetrating the infinite." (Montessori, 1973, p. 39). Her methodological recommendations follow from this mixed philosophical basis. She writes:

Now the child must have constant recourse to his imagination.

Imagination is the greatest force of this age. Since we are unable to present everything, it is up to the child to use his imagination.

The instruction of children from seven to twelve years of age must appeal to the imagination. A configuration of reality must evolve in the imagination. It is necessary therefore to be strictly precise.

Exactness, as a numeral and as all that makes up mathematics, will serve to build that configuration of reality. Now what is it that strikes the imagination? Above all, grandeur and, next, mystery.

The imagination is able to reconstruct the whole when it knows the real detail . . . Imagination does not become great until man, given

the courage and strength, uses it to create. (Montessori, 1973, p. 37)

Nowhere do we find a better example of the tension between the need to control and the need to liberate the imagination than in these comments by Montessori. She preserves the notion that numerical exactness is best for reining in the wild imagination of the child, echoing the concerns of earlier thinkers such as Kant and Rousseau. In the very next sentences, however, she articulates sentiments fully in keeping with those of Wordsworth and Coleridge in their celebration of the sublime and mysterious as proper food for the creative imagination. Just as it is difficult to know exactly what role formal schooling would play for Wordsworth in the idealized development of the imagination, it is difficult to know what the Montessorian teacher should do. We can suppose that the teacher should be very detailed in the descriptions of the grand and mysterious. Yet, we would also think that “numerical” precision, in itself, is unlikely to evoke feelings of mystery and grandeur in the child.

Montessori serves as the finest example of theoretical internal conflict that accompanies the movement from the celebratory, spiritualistic tone of Romantic thinking to the practical concerns of the “modern” classroom. There is a slight but perceptible de-emphasis of the individualism and spiritualism of Pestalozzi and Froebel in Montessori although we still see the imagination advanced as the supreme human creative power. We might say this de-emphasis comes with a degree of realism about classroom control. Montessori was perhaps more

sensitive to the reality of what kinds of discipline and knowledge underprivileged children need in order to flourish than were either Pestalozzi or Froebel.

Montessori seems to have dealt more honestly with the tension between the controlled environment of the classroom and the celebration of the creative imagination than other progressives. She was confronted with the basic task of educating the “mind” while at the same time disciplining the body. Her answer involves what might seem at first glance to be a contradiction: “discipline must come through liberty” (Montessori, 1964, p. 86). Yet this is precisely how Montessori taught. The child must internalize discipline by seeing the *good* in attention, observation, and control (Montessori, 1964, p. 94).

Montessori was wrestling with the problem that would continue to face progressive (and Romantic) education, especially the education of young children. Subscribed to a conceptualization of the imagination that called for creative expression, freedom, and exposure to the beautiful the teacher was faced with potential problems in the area of discipline. The perceived chaos in early progressive classrooms in North America provided ample ammunition for critics of the expressivism of Parker and other proponents of the “new” education (Cremin, 1969). The tensions between freedom and control lead naturally to serious and often-debated questions about education in general. Is schooling primarily for the mental development of the child or is it a preparation for adult society -- especially the workforce? Do children learn best when given strict rules or when given the freedom to discover rules for themselves? “Curriculum-centered” or “child-centered”? Phonics or whole language? Precise or

"creative" spelling? Although I would not want to suggest that the imagination is at the root of all these questions, I would argue that the impact of the Romantic imagination on the reformist educators of the mid-to-late 19th and early 20th centuries made these questions (and debates) inevitable.

With this tension in mind, we turn in Part II to modern theorizing about the place of the imagination in the curriculum.

CONCLUSION

The concept of the creative imagination, with its relationship to self, art, or even the divine, served as the foundation on which education reformers and theorists of the 19th and early 20th centuries built a number of arguments about education reform. The ideas, first articulated in Europe by educators influenced by Rousseau, Kant, Schelling, and Fichte, soon were given flesh in both European and North American schools.

The child-centered, expressivistic pedagogy of Pestalozzi and Froebel had already found inroads to American schooling practices before Colonel Francis Wayland Parker wrote his widely-read *Talks on Teaching* (1883) and *Talks on Pedagogics* (1894). The Oswego teacher training school in New York and its corresponding "Oswego movement" had popularized Pestalozzian ideas among many educators (Curtis and Boulton, 1964, p. 350; Cremin, 1969, p. 134). Kindergarten had appeared in the United States in 1857 and had spread to many major cities (Cremin, 1969, p. 134).

Parker would, in his wide-ranging influence, solidify the influence of the European Romantic educational theorists in North America and the place of the Romantic conceptualization of the imagination in the pedagogy of the growing progressive movement. For Parker (as with the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley a half-century earlier), the imagination was not only the faculty of creative expression but also the key to wisdom, morality, and spirituality -- recall his sentiment that the “study of the thoughts of God in nature, filling the mind, as it does, with things of beauty, prepares the imagination for clear and strong conceptions of the higher spiritual life” (Parker, 1893, p. 174). An imagination fed with the good and beautiful would *know* the good and beautiful.

Education also inherited from these early education reformers, among other things, a desire to mediate freedom and individuality with social control. Schools want children and students to “use their imagination” but just as long as they do so without causing disruption in the classroom. The tension is given its purest expression in the educational theory of Maria Montessori. Schools want to celebrate creative expression just as long as it is “on task.” To have *schooling* value, the Romantic imagination had to be tamed. Part of the taming, in the context of Parker’s emphasis on art, involved linking the imagination with certain kinds of curriculum materials. Part of the taming also, in the context of Pestalozzi and Froebel, involved the focus on early education and the play of children. For Montessori, the imagination was to be *disciplined* -- controlled such that it could realize its full potential. We shall see in the following chapters the

continuing curricular “placement” of the imagination in the realms of early childhood and the arts.

There are a number of other consequences or upshots of this taming, some of which we shall explore later. For now, we only need recognize that as the imagination moved from the philosophy and poetics of the Romantics to the classrooms of Europe and North America it was fundamentally and significantly changed. The change was inevitable. Most Romantics did not intend their conception and use of the creative imagination to make much sense in the context of *schooling*. For the Romantics, the imagination was what made human beings individuals -- it was, to commit an anachronism, counter-cultural. Educators since Rousseau have, however, rarely had the luxury of talking about single pupils. Part of the task of public education is to confer similarity upon individuals, be it a common cultural curriculum or the ability to participate in a democratic society.

The Romantic understanding of mind and the understanding of the creative imagination therein may have launched the revolution in education thinking, but it was a *bon voyage* without return. The assimilation of Romantic thought into educational discourse necessarily created a deep unease between the concept of imagination in Romantic philosophy of mind and aesthetics and the concept in the language of educational policy.

Part II:

The Curricularization of the

Imagination

Reform movements in education, both in Europe and North America, had seized upon the powers granted to the creative imagination by the Romantics. The road ahead was clear. With the value of the imagination linked to self-expression and self-realization, educators were faced with the task of making curricular arguments about the best way to educate the imagination. What kinds of curriculum materials and practices were the best food for a growing imagination? Cases had been made by earlier thinkers for everything from mathematics to painting. With curriculum demands in modern public schools pushing and pulling the worth of the arts, sciences, and vocational training, there were 20th century educators who sought to launch their own arguments about what the curriculum should look like with the "engine" of the imagination.

In Part II I look at modern and contemporary arguments for the education of the imagination. Although there is often much cross-over between theorists who make cases for the imagination, I have tried to distinguish between two main paths that educators and educational theorists have walked. The first is the tradition of argument about and for literature (and, to a limited degree, the arts in general) in the school curriculum, an argument that ostensibly falls into the formula "engagement with creative expression is good for the imagination". The second is the tradition, rooted in various kinds of "progressivist" educational thought, that the best opportunities for development and stimulation of the imagination come through schooling practices that give the most exploratory

freedom to students. This tradition more heavily informs discourse surrounding early childhood and primary schooling while the former is more often found in talk of the curriculum in later grades. What I wish to draw attention to, in both cases, is the way in which recent educators and educational theorists have used the concept of the imagination to make curricular arguments. Based on the premise that the imagination is a good thing and ought to be stimulated (a position common to the theorists treated in both of the following chapters), theorists have reached the conclusion that certain pedagogical approaches must be part of the school curriculum. We shall begin, in the following chapters, to investigate whether contemporary recommendations for the stimulation and development of the imagination make any sense.

My main argument through both of the following two chapters is that the concept of the imagination is a kind of smokescreen for the ideological positions that underlie the curricular arguments we see in contemporary educational discourse about the imagination. The imagination, although taken to be a beacon on which to fix our thinking about good educational practice, is more like a fog -- it misleads by concealing and obscuring. The focus on the imagination conceals and obscures the social, moral, and political dimensions of the curricular arguments that theorists wish to make. Whereas the Romantics used the concept of the imagination to react to, and openly position themselves against, existing traditions, modern educational theorists have kept the Romantic conception of the imagination (to varying degrees) but either avoided this kind of

positioning altogether or linked their positions on educational values to the imagination in miseducative ways.

This avoidance of positioning stems from the effort to resolve the tension between the Romantic conception of the imagination and the practical demands of classroom schooling -- a tension we saw most explicit in Montessori's understanding of the "educated" imagination. Most public educators strive to make curricular arguments that are widely acceptable -- that unify rather than factionalize. The place of the arts or of an "activity-oriented" pedagogy in the public school is advocated on the basis that it is good for all students, and that contact with these educational practices is generally beneficial.

I do not, however, want to argue that the educational recommendations -- literature or "play", for example -- have no merit. Rather, in the following two chapters and in the first chapter of Part III (Chapter 5) I want to try to strip away the justificatory power of the imagination and evaluate the curricular arguments based on what remains. What does remain are somewhat concealed, unclear, problematic, or simply toothless positions about the social value of the curricular strategies recommended (in so much as they are tied tightly to the amorphous concept of the imagination). My aim is to show that reliance on the Romantic imagination weakens, rather than bolsters, contemporary curricular arguments. In moving in this direction, critically, I am also assuming a stance myself on the nature and purpose of education. I am assuming that education cannot be ideologically (morally, socially, politically) neutral and that we cannot help but school children *toward* particular social practices and values. By recognizing

this, I also place the burden of proof in curricular arguments on the degree to which those who make the arguments aim at equipping students with tools, habits, abilities, and dispositions that are of fundamental importance to healthy participation in social life.¹ I realize that my own position here requires further explanation and development. I ask the reader, at this point, to bear with me for a time and simply take a promissory note that this is where we are headed. I want to tease out the nature of the “smokescreen” of the imagination in educational discourse before I try to disperse it.

¹ And, for our society, a social life involving democratic practices and freedom of expression.

Chapter Three: Imagination and Creative Expression

In this chapter we look closely at arguments that relate the development of the imagination to engagement with creative expression -- especially literature, and in a limited form, the arts in general. Two lines of theorizing, I believe, have taken center stage in this century on the education of the imagination. The first, most pronounced in the study of English literature, involves the sophistication of the imagination for largely social benefit. It is a tradition that flows directly from Shelley's famous celebration of imagination, moral insight, and poetic power. The second line of interest more generally hopes to establish the place of the "arts" by arguing that the arts, both in reception and production, free the mind of the student. It is a tradition with roots in Romanticism and progressivist educational theory but a tradition also, in its later forms, deeply informed by phenomenological and existentialist psychology and philosophy.

Deanne Bodgan, although speaking of literature education, summarizes the two positions and also, I believe, captures the continuing problem. Bodgan, in *Re-Educating the Imagination*, writes of the contemporary task of teaching literature:

[T]oday's teachers of literature are faced with the paradoxical task of conditioning the minds and feelings of the young in two directions at once -- that of enculturation into a collective ethos or

worldview, on the one hand, and personal growth and development, on the other. (Bogdan, 1992, p. xxii)

I would echo Bogdan's comment and note, again, the Romantic roots of the concept of imagination. The Romantic imagination, as imported into pedagogical theory and practice, added a deep tension between the conservative and equalizing role of education and its potential liberatory role in self-expression and self-realization. Percy Shelley's celebration of the imagination as the instrument toward moral good and social transformation, and the parallel treatments of the imagination by Froebel, Pestalozzi, and early progressive educators inevitably complicated the task of literature education. If the reason to study creative works is no longer simply to become a man (and I emphasize the gendered term) of letters, but to become personally transformed and fulfilled in a meaningful way, the teacher of Shakespeare, Mozart, or Picasso has a daunting task. Teachers now have the obligation to make the Western artistic "canon" personally meaningful and potentially transformative to all students. To hammer the classic works of Western literature into the heads of students or to take children to an Impressionist exhibit at the local art gallery for the sole purpose of cultural homogenization is now seen, at least by many educators, as a pedagogy of violence.¹

I intend to show the "smokescreen" effect inherent to both traditions. Discussions of the imagination in these traditions, I shall argue, take us away

¹ Most prominent among recent critics who are pushing for a reversal of positions such as this is E.D. Hirsch, Jr. in his best-selling book *Cultural Literacy*.

from rather than toward constructive pedagogy about the arts, literature, and creative thought by disguising ideological positions with the language of the developing imagination.

“SOPHISTICATING” THE IMAGINATION

We visited Shelley’s identification of imagination as the “great instrument of moral good” and poetry as its primary food in Chapter One. A number of important literary and educational theorists since Shelley would continue the effort to substantiate, develop, and further Shelley’s basic tenet. The core interest throughout this line of thought is the status of literature and literate culture, and not the imagination *per se*. Thus, while we are led to believe that great literature improves the general capacity of the imagination, we are really left in the end with arguments about whose books and whose culture belong in the educational “canon”. The concept of the imagination is yoked to arguments about good books to effectively pull them into the common curriculum.

The particular *benefit* of literature, according to this tradition, is its potential to raise the consciousness -- by sophisticating the imagination -- of the masses and so also improve society in general. Faith is placed in the power of great literature to humanize citizens, especially those who have not previously had much contact with the world of “letters”. This faith, not surprisingly, was a direct outgrowth of Romanticism and of the British Romantic poets in particular.

Indeed, it was the rise of Romanticism and the revolutionizing poetics of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the rest of the Romantic and post-Romantic English poets and poet-educators, that "created" such a thing as the study of English literature (Eagleton, 1983, pp. 18-19; Willinsky, 1991, p.2). Just as the creative imagination lay at the core of Romanticism, it also lay at the core of the new understanding of literature. Literary historian and critic Terry Eagleton writes, "[B]y the time of the Romantic period, literature was becoming virtually synonymous with the 'imaginative': to write about what did not exist was somehow more soul-stirring and valuable than to pen an account of Birmingham or the circulation of the blood" (Eagleton, 1983, p. 18). The importance of the imagination naturally followed the influence of the British Romantic poets into the realm of education. As Shelley had written in his *Defense of Poesy*, imagination was the faculty responsible for not just creative power but for morality. Great literature, especially great poetry, would (if properly taught) inspire students and make them upstanding citizens.

Matthew Arnold, a teacher and influential education inspector in late 19th-century Britain, besides being a talented poet, would use this newfound importance of literature to argue (drawing directly from Shelley) for its wide-range inclusion in English middle class schools (Willinsky, 1991, pp. 54-80). Although Arnold's Victorian sensibilities were tamer than the revolutionary aspirations of Shelley, his conclusions about the value of poetry were the same. It was moral nourishment for the soul. He emphasized its civilizing power and argued for the

importance of enjoying literature -- an argument still very powerful in the classrooms of today (Willinsky, 1991, p. 64).

Following Arnold were a number of individuals who gravitated around Cambridge University after World War I, including I.A. Richards, F.R. Leavis, and Queenie Dorothy Roth (who later married Leavis). The changes they would bring to the advanced study of English cannot be understated:

In fashioning English into a serious discipline, these men and women blasted apart the assumptions of the pre-war upper-class generation. No subsequent movement within English studies has come near to recapturing the courage and radicalism of their stand. In the early 1920s it was desperately unclear why English was worth studying at all; by the early 1930s it had become a question of why it was worth wasting your time on anything else. English was not only a subject worth studying, but *the* supremely civilizing pursuit, the spiritual essence of the social formation. (Eagleton, 1983, p. 31)

Richards, under whom Leavis studied, based what would become widely known as the New Criticism on thoroughly Romantic grounds. Following Arnold he would emphasize the humanizing effect of great literature, arguing with the help of a more developed field of psychology that literature helps us overcome the disjunction and chaos in the world (Eagleton, 1983, p. 45). Literature humanizes

us by organizing our experiences into meaningful, emotionally-laden wholes. Where does this organization take place? The imagination. In the imagination, the individual reader, seeking to make personal sense of the world, could interact with the organized "world" of the text. For Richards, the study of literature and poetry was, as it was for Shelley, the "supreme" study of the mind and the creative imagination. Richards was profoundly influenced by Coleridge's theory of the imagination although he was reluctant to embrace the "facultyism" of the Romantics (Richards, 1968). Ann Berthoff, a scholar on I.A. Richards and proponent of Richard's critical methods in literature education, writes:

I.A. Richards' greatest importance for us is that he was able to see the pedagogical implications of certain organic conceptions of language and thought as they were set forth in Coleridge's theory of imagination. He certainly assented to Whitehead's claim that Romanticism was a protest on behalf of the organic, recognizing the centrality of ideas of mediation and activity, of growth and development. For Richards, *Imagination* named the active mind, the mind in action construing and constructing, dissolving and recreating, making sense, making meaning. (Berthoff, 1990, p. 61)

Richards' work, beyond being instrumental in the development of the New Criticism, a critical tradition that held sway through the 1950s (at least) in America, laid the foundation for F.R. and Queenie Dorothy Leavis' more direct

educational suggestions.¹ Embarking from Richards' starting point of the constructive, meaning-making imagination, Leavis "articulated an essentially ameliorative hope for education, true to the Arnoldian tradition" (Willinsky, 1991, p. 106). The doldrums of life in an industrialized, modernized world were to be overcome for the masses by exposure to the vibrancy of the aesthetic text -- a text capable of writing a lost organic wholeness on the messy realities of urban England (Willinsky, 1991, p.99).

Of all the influential literature education theorists of the 20th century, Northrop Frye stands out as the critic who most developed a theory of the place of the imagination in "advanced" literacy. In 1963 Northrop Frye delivered a series of radio lectures -- entitled *The Educated Imagination* -- on Canadian public radio. Frye presents a case for the study of literature as an agent in social sensibility. His case swings on the importance of developing an "educated" imagination. Frye argues:

Literature speaks the language of the imagination, and the study of literature is supposed to train and improve the imagination. But we use our imagination all the time: it comes into all our conversation and practical life: it even produces dreams when we're asleep.

Consequently we have only the choice between a badly trained

¹ It is quite likely that English teachers in North America were "raised" in the New Criticism through the 1960's and 1970's as education sub-disciplines tend to lag slightly behind the "parent" disciplines. Consequently, most English teachers in the schools from the 1950's through the 1980's (and even today) were "raised" in the New Criticism.

imagination and a well trained one, whether we ever read a poem
or not. (Frye, 1963, p. 135)

For Frye, the imagination is the portion of the mind most active in dreams, myths, ideas, visions of the good and possible, and desires. The duty and purpose of education is to sophisticate that world by offering (through exposure to literature) a wide range of stories, myths, and visions up to which the student-as-critic can hold the "real" world. Although, as he implies, literature is not the only route to "training" the imagination it is certainly one of the best if taught correctly. Making specific reference to Matthew Arnold, Frye maintains that education provides "the kind of standards and values we need if we're to do anything better than adjust" (Frye, 1963, p. 153).

In his rhetoric of cultural improvement and the importance of literature as a world of the possible, Frye shows sensitivity to the danger that democratic society will lose a social vision. Yet there is a streak of individualism and perhaps a "linguistic" elitism in Frye as well. The power to resist false advertising and the power to sway others stems from an educated imagination. In a slightly disturbing conception of positive freedom Frye writes, "Nobody is capable of free speech unless he knows how to use language, and such knowledge is not a gift: it has to be learned and worked at (Frye, 1963, p. 149). I shall return to Frye's sentiment later, since I want to advance a similar argument but avoid the aspect of "capability". For now, I would remark that what is disturbing here is the idea that those not on the inside of "learned" language-use are *incapable* of free

speech. The danger is that we shall be seduced into a normative argument -- into saying the speech of the uneducated does not merit our attention. Rather, I think that intimacy with language use can and often does make one's speech more powerful and effective.

Frye offers a Great Learning. Without literature, the collective imagination of the masses is likely to be passive, mob-oriented, and unable to see past and present realities. An uneducated imagination is uneducated speech and uneducated culture.

The period from Shelley to Frye spans two centuries and the theorists within that period are by no means all in agreement about education or the study of literature. Shelley, Arnold, Richards, Leavis, and Frye do, however, all share a basic position on the "why" involved in educating the imagination. From the Romantics, these thinkers have inherited a language surrounding the creative imagination that ties imagination to individuality, empathy, self-expression, and a developed rationality. Imagination, as the *vis activa* of the mind, is really where all educative efforts should be focused. Also from the Romantics, and Shelley's belief in the educative power of poetry in particular, these thinkers have inherited a trust in the worth of good books.

They also share a Romantic position on the "how" element of imagination pedagogy, yet it seems to be a vaguely circular position: good stories educate and sophisticate the imagination by engaging it; the imagination engaged and at work deep within skillfully crafted language is the imagination growing and developing. The hope, although it is seems much more like a confident

expectation, is that the imagination thus engaged and developed provides the individual with something generalizable to all facets of life -- moral and social sensibility in addition to intellectual growth. There is an implicit causal assumption here. It is not simply familiarity with literary forms and an increased vocabulary that these thinkers want -- although these are certainly among the most concrete results of exposure to good stories. There needs to be improvement, betterment, in the aspects of the mind and self attributed to the sympathetic, organic, and constructive powers of the imagination. What else is education for, after all, if not for the development of the mind? For these thinkers, the component of the mind that is the "occasion" for such development is the imagination.

It is a powerful, if perhaps circular, argument for curricular content and especially for "quality" literature. The curriculum should consist of those things which are imaginatively engaging -- myths, adventure, the mysterious "other". The reason why the curriculum should be so constituted is because to engage the imagination is to free the imagination and all its associated abilities. What is not clear, however, is whether or not being imaginatively engaged does indeed result in a general intellectual and moral sophistication. We have reason to be skeptical. While literacy and exposure to cultural Great Learnings may very well confer upon students an expanded vocabulary of places, people, and times it may just as well create biases, prejudices, and cultural blindness. There have been plenty of intelligent, wise, and moral individuals who are illiterate as well as plenty of highly literate monsters.

But I may be unfair here; certainly these may be exceptions and not rules. We might say, it is the *kind* of literature and the *kind* of literate engagement and education that makes the difference. I think this is probably the right move to make, but it is a move away from Shelley's confidence in the poetic. Not very many within the Romantic tradition have been wholly comfortable with such a move either. It opens the door to all sorts of nasty, demanding questions -- which books, whose books, whose understanding of engagement, whose pedagogy? It is the kind of move that makes it much more difficult to justify the teaching of Shakespeare to those who do not draw their linguistic and socio-cultural lineage back in that direction.

What is being maintained, argued about, and justified is not the role of imagination but the *content* of the educated and literate imagination -- the host of associations, assumptions, readings, interpretations, images, and beliefs that are seen as desirable and, at least in part, constitutive of cultural forms and values. The schooling of literature began as and continues to be, as John Willinsky has persuasively argued, a way to give something of meaning to the commoner (Willinsky, 1991). It is a means with which to raise the sensibilities of the everyday person whether morally, aesthetically, or politically by putting them into contact with good stories.

In a remarkable but wholly understandable irony, Shelley's defense of poetry as food for the liberating, transforming, and revolutionizing imagination has completed a transformation of its own into an argument for cultural preservation. Shelley positioned himself against Enlightenment norms -- in the

realms of the aesthetic, moral, and political -- with his vision of the poetic enterprise. He wrote of poetry, "Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it" (Shelley, 1977, p. 491). For Shelly, poetry and the poetic imagination were weapons of social, cultural, religious, and political resistance.

Faced with the basic inability to accommodate revolutionary vision into the justification for literature in the public school curriculum, theorists have made the imagination a viable *object* of education. That is to say, arguments about the role of literature in building and training the imagination rise on the power of good stories to nourish and develop *only the capacity for* critical thought, empathetic understanding, and moral sensibility. Woe be it indeed to anyone who argues directly and overtly for the role of literature in the direct teaching of morality, for example, or political stances. Those who do so tend to be placed at the radical ends of the spectrum, as is the case with moral or religious fundamentalists (especially in the realm of Biblical interpretation) or classical Marxists of the most dogmatic kind. This is the smokescreen of the imagination at work. Of course, Arnold, Leavis, Frye, and countless other educators have their own ideological ends in view when they argue for a pedagogy of imaginative engagement. But what they wish to sell to the schools is a vision of the study of literature as redeeming in a generally acceptable way precisely because it improves a capacity, faculty, or ability everyone has. Good literature is sound pedagogy because it helps us think better without telling us how to think or what to think.

Or so we are led to believe. I shall return to the problems with such a view at the conclusion to this chapter. For now, we should only keep in mind the powerful Romantic tradition that links stories -- especially "quality" literature, imagination, and personal improvement. We should keep it in mind not so much as an argument about the *imagination* but as an argument which relies upon a Romantic conception of the imagination for its persuasive force.

THE CREATIVE SELF UNLEASHED

The Shelleyean literary tradition, with its focus on general social improvement and humanizing sophistication, has not been the only area in which education scholars of this century have "imported" the Romantic imagination and built curricular arguments. Since Colonel Parker, educators have seen the expressive arts in general as fuel for the imagination at-work. Just as Parker and Pestalozzi and Froebel before him argued that expression was the path to self-realization, a number of education theorists have emphasized the educative relationships between a feeling and thinking subject (the student) and the aesthetic object. I shall focus attention on the work of Louise Rosenblatt in literature education and the perspectives of Ruth Mock, Mary Warnock, and Maxine Greene on general "arts" education. At the heart of discussion about expression, imagination, and self-realization is an effort to provide strong justification for the inclusion of creative expression in the curriculum. Prior to progressive reform efforts both in Europe and North America, there was certainly no widely-accepted reason for setting students to expressive work in the school. Despite Colonel Parker's optimism about the future of art and craft in the school, art educators have faced an uphill battle throughout this century, especially during periods of traditionalism and technicalism.

In art and also in reading and creative writing there have been a number of educational theorists who have advanced "cases" for creative expression,

literature, and the arts on the basis of the power of the imagination to break down boundaries between self and object, and between self and others. While the following thinkers are by no means exhaustive of writing about the value of the “arts”, they are among the most influential proponents of the educational value of the arts (generally speaking) *in terms of the imagination*.

Louise Rosenblatt’s theoretical work on reading instruction and creative writing stands opposed to traditional forms of reading instruction and also the structuralism of the New Criticism. Rosenblatt was among the strongest, most influential, and most articulate of the proponents of new reading and writing in America. She combined elements from progressive education (especially from Dewey) with an interest in cultural study and American pragmatist philosophy (Connell, 1996). Although Rosenblatt parts company with Richards and Leavis in her emphasis on the response of the reader to reading (as opposed to the textual emphasis of the New Criticism), she shares with them a faith in literature as both artform and instrument for moral and social good (Connell, 1996; Willinsky, 1991).

Rosenblatt argued for the personal and social value of literature during the pivotal period of progressive educational reform in the 1920s and 30s.¹ The “transaction” (to use her terminology) between reader and text is a movement between self and other in which the self has the opportunity to experience new ideas, feelings, and worlds. Rosenblatt personalized the act of reading and conferred upon it the activity so essential to progressive education.

The creative and assimilating imagination is as important for Rosenblatt as it was for Shelley and Coleridge. Concerning the impact of literature in the formation of personality Rosenblatt writes:

Of all the elements that enter into the educational process -- except, of course, the actual personal relationships and activities which make up the community life of the school -- literature possesses the greatest potential for that kind of assimilation of ideas and attitudes. For literature enables the youth to "live through" -- and to reflect on -- much that in abstract terms would be meaningless to him. He comes to know intimately, more intimately perhaps than would be possible in actual life, many personalities. He vicariously shares their struggles and perplexities and achievements. He becomes a part of strange environments, or he sees with new emotions the conditions and the lives about him. And these vicarious experiences have at least something of the warmth and color and immediacy of life. (Rosenblatt, 1968, p. 182)

The self-expansion achieved through the study of literature, for Rosenblatt, is the key not only to self-improvement but to societal improvement. She comments, "Lack of such imaginative sympathy is probably back of many of our present-day problems" (Rosenblatt, 1968, p. 186). Her most direct reference

¹ The recommendations for further reading in her *Literature as Exploration* include Dewey and Santayana (to whom she gives special credit), I.A. Richards' *Practical Criticism*, Jerome Bruner's *On Knowing*, and

to the importance of the imagination captures, in my opinion, the essence of her theory of reading:

Someone has said, "The fool learns only through experience. The wise man anticipates experiences." This suggests two essential traits of literature: its power to give vicarious experience and its delineation of a great diversity of personalities and conduct. Is not the imagination -- the ability to picture oneself in a variety of situations and to envisage alternative modes of behavior and their consequences -- the thing that gives the "wise man" his advantage? (Rosenblatt, 1968, p. 199)

Rosenblatt's confidence is infectious. It provides the classroom teacher of English both a method and a vision. It shows the teacher students whose imaginations are waiting to be brought to the worlds and characters of literature. As is the case with all the reformers discussed in this chapter, Rosenblatt found imagination in children and saw that it demanded education. For Rosenblatt, literature was the best occasion in the school curriculum for vicarious *learning*. The exchange between the "world" of the book and the reality of the student was an exchange that, in ideal form, would cross boundaries and open new ways of seeing reality for the student.

Writing in 1970, British art educator and theorist Ruth Mock fought a similar battle for intimate creative exchange by calling attention to the

Alfred North Whitehead's *The Aims of Education* (Rosenblatt, 1968, pp. 293-297).

relationship between artistic creation, the imagination, and general mental development. The purpose of art in education, according to Mock, is to stimulate imagination which might otherwise be left undeveloped in other areas. Mock draws a distinction between the use of imagination in the study of science, for example, and art by suggesting that the products of scientific discovery do not necessarily "stimulate and extend imagination in an observer" as do artistic products (Mock, 1970, p. 101). She also makes a distinction between the imagination and analysis, flirting at times with a distinction between imaginative thought and rational thought. She writes of the student:

In his academic education there may be undue emphasis on fragmentary facts, criticism, analysis, and examinable results, while all the while praise may be given to the quick-witted. In art and craft he learns to give his undivided objective attention, to put imaginative understanding before criticism, to respond to the whole of an experience, to record or express it in an integrated form and in some degree to comprehend the reality of imaginative truth.

(Mock, 1970, p. 133)

For Mock, the key to the development of the imagination, to realizing "imaginative truth", lies in the act of revealing oneself to others through creative expression: "The artist makes a personal statement and, in the fact of its existence and whether or not it is his intention, he communicates with another

personality and stimulates his imaginative faculties" (Mock, 1970, p. 103). It is not the quality of the art that matters, but rather the occasion for true expression of the artist's "inner nature."

Mock's sentiments may indeed have been shared by many North American educators struggling to put the arts back into a curriculum defined through the '40s, '50s, and early '60s by an emphasis on science, mathematics, and technological progress. At a meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1972 entitled "Imagination -- Key to Human Potential" American educators celebrated the imagination with true Romantic intensity (National Association for the Educational of Young Children, 1972). The post-meeting publication advises:

Through the languages of imagination, you might make a song, or a poem, about that past time and by "exercising the muscles of the imagination," you can speak with depth of the images and feelings.

It is a conversation with yourself, by which you enrich the experiences of the present by recreating out of past feelings.

(McVickar, 1972, p. 23)

Social change in the late '60s and '70s may have laid the groundwork for the re-introduction of this kind of progressive and expressivist pedagogical language but a great deal of philosophical and psychological "troubled" water had flowed under the bridge since the times of Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Parker.

If we understand imagination as a mental faculty with an identifiable nature and function, arguments about art in the curriculum which follow Coleridge, Wordsworth, Emerson, Pestalozzi, and Froebel make a great deal of sense within the Romantic tradition. Thus Parker's arguments carried weight near the turn of the 20th century among North American educators who were theoretically "close" to Emerson, the British Romantics, and the exciting new pedagogy from Europe.

Through this century, however, there have been psychological and philosophical movements which have had direct impact on the conception of the creative imagination in its relation to creative expression. Freud, and, later, Jung's emphasis on the basic "creative" power of the unconstrained mind provided fertile ground for educators and educational theorists although as the influence of "pure" psychoanalysis has waned so has a purely Freudian conception of the imagination (Egan & Nadaner, 1988, p. XI). Developmental psychology has surpassed both Freudian and older behaviorist accounts of mind to arguably reign supreme in current psychological thinking about education (we shall look in more detail at imagination in 20th century experimental psychology in the next chapter). It is no longer so easy to base one's arguments about the proper education for the imagination on the "facultyism" of the Romantics.

One tradition of modern thought -- phenomenology -- has been particularly successful in opening lines of argumentation for contemporary educational theorists who wish to defend the importance of the arts and the imagination in the curriculum without strict reliance on a Romantic or pre-

Romantic understanding of mind. Phenomenological philosophy and phenomenological psychology have provided a theoretical "space" that moves beyond the discredited language of Romantic accounts of the imagination but at the same time a number of those within the phenomenological tradition wish to preserve much of the importance placed in the imagination by the Romantics.

Growing primarily out of the work of philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) but with important contributions from Martin Heidegger and even Friedrich Nietzsche, phenomenology is the philosophic and psychologic study of that-which-is-perceived. The first and still perhaps pre-eminent contribution in the phenomenological study of the imagination came from Jean-Paul Sartre. In *The Psychology of the Imagination*, Sartre teases out the full implications of the human ability to call to mind images -- of past, present, and possible future events, and of the real and "unreal" (as in the case of Hobbes' centaur). He dwells on the importance of dreams and on the relationship between images and mental health. His project, however, is more lofty in goal than a simple cataloguing of the kinds of images we are capable of forming. Following his teachers (Husserl and Heidegger), he wishes to understand the ontological importance of the imagination: the relationship between imagination and the concepts of self, consciousness, and being. Sartre introduces his concluding chapter with the words:

We are now in a position to raise the metaphysical question which has been gradually shaping itself by these studies of

phenomenological psychology. We may formulate it as follows:
What are the characteristics that can be attributed to
consciousness from the fact that it is a consciousness capable of
imagining?" (Sartre, 1968, p. 223)

Sartre's answer to this question is complex, philosophical, and existentialist in nature. The imagination, with the power to simultaneously deny the "real" and envisage the "unreal" allows both a negation and affirmation of the lived world. While we deny the world in envisioning the "unreal" we construct actual objects of contemplation for our minds. This double-move, or tension, Sartre argues, indicates that the imagination is, at its essence, "the whole of consciousness as it realizes its freedom" (Sartre, 1968, p. 243). It is the foundation of doubt as well as the foundation for artistic creation.

At this point, Sartre's formulation should sound familiar. Sartre's emphasis on the freedom granted by the imagination is not that much different from Coleridge's, Froebel's, or Richards' (to name but three) thoughts on the imagination. Egan, surveying the changing "face" of imagination in the 20th century, remarks about the similarity between Sartre, Coleridge, and I.A. Richards (a contemporary of Sartre's) but also notes the important difference between the two modern thinkers and Coleridge:

Both Sartre and Richards agree, however, that we will not get a clear grasp on the powers of the imagination if we focus on a *part*

of the mind's functioning; rather imagination is understood better as *a way in which* the mind functions when actively involved in meaning-making, in its generative mode. (Egan, 1992, p. 29)

This departure from the earlier "faculty" psychology is profound. Sartre bridges current theoretical work (in philosophy and some areas of psychology) and the Romantic tradition. While he discards the particular pseudo-psychological faculty understanding of the Romantic imagination he forcefully holds onto its value in its connection with the aesthetic and personal freedom. He, along with phenomenological theory in general, provides an account of mind that is at once both Romantic and modern. Sartre's modern treatment drives an alienating wedge between the mind, the world, and the minds of others, discarding the spiritualistic tones of earlier Romantics, but through its alienation the phenomenological imagination gains ultimate power: it constructs the totality of the possible for each individual and in turn constructs the self. The "lived" world of the self is a product of the imagination.

The phenomenological understanding of the imagination has been picked up by many thinkers in philosophy, psychology, and education. It has especially informed the work of two recent, prominent educational theorists -- Mary Warnock and Maxine Greene. We look to both to see contemporary arguments for the imagination and arts in school that strive to pull the transformative power of the Romantic vision together with the philosophical sophistication of phenomenological thought.

Mary Warnock's work cannot be easily slotted into any category. It bridges many areas of philosophy, psychology, and the history of ideas. The educational import of philosophy, however, is a fundamental component of her work. In her book, *Imagination*, Warnock surveys both the Romantic and pre-Romantic roots of phantasia, and imagination, and concludes, as I myself have done, that "it is impossible to understand the concept of imagination without attempting to understand the romantic version of this concept, even if it is not the only possible version" (Warnock, 1976, p. 201). She ends her study with a chapter entitled "Imagination and Education." Following Sartre, she settles upon the ability to "detach" oneself from the present and to see past actualities as a conception of the "function of the imagination whenever it is exercised" (Warnock, 1976, p. 197). Like Sartre, she also believes that the imagination should be understood not as a separate part of the mind but as a function of the whole mind-at-work (Warnock, 1976, p. 202).

Of particular interest to Warnock are the educational implications of this phenomenological understanding of the imagination in the realm of the aesthetic. Art provides the most basic opportunity for the development and cultivation of the "power" of imagination because it calls upon both creator and viewer to "detach themselves from the world in order to think of certain objects in the world in a new way, as signifying something else" (Warnock, 1976, p. 197). Like Mock, Warnock holds that in art, more perhaps than anywhere else, there is the opportunity for imaginative growth. There is opportunity because art is seen to

"push" the mind beyond normal mundane constraints and allow for creative and transformative relationships between creator, creation, and audience.

While Warnock recognizes the need to get beyond the "metaphoric" language of faculty psychology, she often herself seems to find no other language than that of the Romantics. She celebrates the Romantic account as true "in some sense" since it "fits the facts" (Warnock, 1976, p. 201). The facts, according to Warnock, are that human beings must be able to see "beyond what is immediately in front of them" to be able to use language and symbolic expression (Warnock, 1976, p. 201). As with Shelley, Schelling, and a host of other Romantic thinkers, Warnock also argues that the imagination is the key to morality. She writes, fully embracing Romantic metaphor: "If imagination will save us, it is the very same imagination which enables us to grasp the forms [of reality] in the first place and then to visit and revisit them in our mind's eye" (Warnock, 1976, p. 204).

The duty of the educator, especially the educator within the "creative" arts, in educating for this expanded world of perception is more than simply handing students creative materials -- whether paints or musical instruments. For Warnock, the drive for originality is even a misplaced emphasis in the teaching of creative expression. The most important aspect of creative expression is the expression in and of itself; that it is free and unconstrained by prior interpretation. Speaking of the place of interpretation and critique in the creation of and response to artistic expression, Warnock argues, "It is the emotional sense of the infinity or inexhaustibleness of things which will give point to their experience,

not a body of doctrine which they might perhaps extract from it, if they were doctrinally inclined” (Warnock, 1976, p. 207).

Warnock's juxtaposition of doctrinaire critique or interpretation with free expression to some degree follows the sense of the creative imagination being restricted by the analytic -- a sense that goes as far back as Wordsworth and Coleridge's reversal of the status of creative imagination *vis a vis* rational thought. We saw it as well in Mock, previously. This juxtaposition, or prioritizing of "imaginative" expression over critique in the arts, deeply informs ongoing discussion of the place of the arts in the curriculum. It is a prioritizing of that which is taken to be the realm of the imagination -- a realm of possibility, symbol, metaphor, image, and representation -- over the realms of logic, scientific rationalism, and reductive instrumentalism. On the side of the arts is imagination, freedom, and moral-sympathetic awareness. On the side of the "unimaginative" is cost-benefit school policy, repression, and even tyranny.

Maxine Greene, a contemporary educational theorist also influenced by a phenomenological account of the imagination, has made just such arguments regarding the place of arts in the curriculum. Lack of imaginative engagement in the schools, according to Greene, is not just a recipe for passivity and boredom but also for moral blindness. Serious engagement with other modes of being, other ways of seeing the world, provide opportunities for seeing wrongs (historical or present). Greene argues:

Imaginative literature is replete with derelict figures and silenced creatures, with persons struggling for moments of wide-awakeness, struggling out of objecthood towards spaces of freedom in their worlds . . . It is not only that readers must release their imagination in order to engage with the perspectives of each work and constitute an illusioned world out of the materials of their own consciousness and social experience. It is, more often than not, that the "as-if" so constituted confronts the reader with ambiguities, gaps, voids that must be dealt with imaginatively -- and always without guarantees. And an individual's experience reveals itself as otherwise than it usually does; it is defamiliarized. Opportunities are provided to see through the taken-for-granted, to disrupt the normal, to see reality anew. (Greene, 1988a, pp. 52-53)

Greene argues that although the arts, be they in the form of creative literature, paintings, or music, cannot "guarantee" imaginative growth they do provide the best opportunities we have for phenomenal "defamiliarization."

Greene emphasizes this point further in an essay entitled "Education, Art, and Mastery: Toward the Spheres of Freedom":

[It] must be acknowledged that, for all their emancipatory potential, the arts cannot be counted upon to liberate, to ensure an education for freedom. Nonetheless, for those authentically concerned about

the "birth of meaning," about breaking through the surfaces, about teaching others to "read" their own worlds, art forms must be conceived of as ever-present possibility. They ought not to be treated as decorative, as frivolous. They ought to be, if transformative teaching is our concern, a central part of curriculum, wherever it is devised. (Greene, 1988b, p. 131)

Greene is not, however, convinced that transformative teaching is a concern for many public education policy-makers in the United States. In a recent article entitled "Art and Imagination: Reclaiming the Sense of Possibility", Maxine Greene makes a case for the arts in the face of political talk of international competition and raised standards in schooling. In the short essay, she draws upon a wealth of thinkers, including Eco, Dewey, Sartre, Arendt, and Warnock. She works from Warnock's essentially phenomenological understanding of the imagination as a capacity for thinking, feeling, and seeing beyond the ready and apparent. Greene writes: "It is my conviction that informed engagements with the several arts would be the most likely way to release the imaginative capacity and give it play" (Greene, 1995, p. 379). Greene emphasizes that students must engage with the aesthetic object, not simply "stand" passively in front of it -- be it painting or poem. Through engagement with the aesthetic, students have opportunities to construct meaning for themselves and to experience different modes of seeing, feeling, and believing. Her case for the arts rests upon this understanding of the relationship between aesthetic object, the creative

imagination, and the meaning-making self of the student. She concludes her essay:

Encounters with the arts nurture and sometimes provoke the growth of individuals who reach out to one another as they seek clearings in their experience and try to live more ardently in the world. If the significance of the arts for growth, inventiveness, and problem solving is recognized at last, a desperate stasis may be overcome, and people may come to recognize the need for new raids on what T.S. Eliot called the "inarticulate". (Greene, 1995, p. 382)

What concerns Greene here is similar to what concerns Louise Rosenblatt, Northrop Frye, and educational theorist Kieran Egan when he argues in *Imagination in Teaching and Learning* that the goal in the education of the imagination should be to find routes past conventional thinking (Egan, 1992). Greene, however, wishes to make a case for the arts not primarily as a route toward making the past (in the form of great work in history, literature, or science) in some important ways present and active for students -- although I think she would agree that this is important -- but as a way in which individuals can see *beyond* the past toward better futures, futures which would include more equal distribution of resources, and futures without discrimination on the basis of gender, race, or sexual orientation.

Rosenblatt, Mock, Warnock, and Greene all use the imagination as a tool for curricular leverage. Today, when the arts are the subject of a little pinch if not a big squeeze in most public schools, the importance of the imagination serves as an effective call-to-arms. To understand the arts as "occasion" for freeing or "unleashing" the imagination to sympathize with others, to see other points of view, to *feel* in new ways, is to recognize and affirm the necessity of the arts and creative expression in schools. This kind of argument, informed in the influential work of Warnock and Greene by phenomenological understandings of perception and mind, is perhaps one of the strongest current arguments for the arts in the curriculum.

There is, however, a serious problem. It rears its face in the language of Warnock and Greene that slips in and out of Romantic metaphors for the imagination. If it is the imagination we are educating when we explore new meanings in the arts and are "awake" to possibility we must also rely upon an understanding of the imagination as something which can be developed, cultivated. For Mock, and progressives earlier in the century this was a taken-for-granted -- the imagination had empirical significance as a part of the mind. For Sartre, the imagination denoted, however, a way in which we can think and not some isolatable mental faculty.

Warnock acknowledges the problems of "faculty" language and also the difficulty in avoiding it. She writes, "It seems to me in fact that such vocabulary is steadily becoming more innocuous as we more clearly recognize it as metaphorical" (Warnock, 1976, p. 196). Yet must there not be some non-

metaphorical sense of the imagination if we are to make the arguments Warnock and Greene wish to make? If the imagination is only a metaphor standing for a facility of mind, or the ability to detach and perceive differently, then certainly the language of "growth" in the value of the arts in the curriculum must also be metaphoric. Metaphors do not easily "grow", however.

The problem stems, I think, from the combination of Romantic "sensibilities" about the imagination with the phenomenological and very un-Romantic understanding of mind that we see *in educational arguments*. When we educate we do and say things with, at the very least, the hope that our students will also do and say things better than before. The word "better" may be replaced with numerous other words -- more thoroughly, more meaningfully, more perceptively, with more feeling, more critically, more imaginatively -- but all such words carry normative significance. We may not always succeed and we may not always agree on whether or not an education program does indeed help students but the intention is still there. If there is no empirical meaning in the use of "imagination" in justifying the place of the arts, theoreticians run the risk of being accused of providing absolutely no means by which we can tell if we are succeeding in our educational endeavors.

Arguments that engagement with creative arts provides opportunity for imaginative growth are efforts, I believe, to position the arts on the same playing field as disciplines which are much more easily justified as having demonstrable, generalizable "pay-offs." The arts and humanities cannot hope to compete, however, with hard sciences or mathematics unless teachers can show evidence

to parents, politicians, and policy-makers that they live up to the advance billing. It may be that the correct kind of exposure to the arts provides for the development of empathy and moral "wide-awakeness" but as a claim about general perceptual and mental development such arguments are in need of much more support.

This is not to say that there is no place for the arts of creative expression in the public schools, nor is it to say that arguments along the lines of Rosenblatt, Mock, Warnock, and Greene have no value. In the next chapter we shall return to the language of creative expression and to the important role that this language plays in the struggle over the imagination in education.

THE ENGAGED IMAGINATION

One contemporary education theorist who has invested the imagination with a degree of importance and theoretical development found in few other places is Kieran Egan. Egan, throughout his numerous books on educational development and curriculum, links the engagement and development of the imagination with the entire educational endeavor. Egan, I think, also offers one possible way in which the division characteristic of the two previous sections -- between socialization and individuality -- can be resolved.

The imagination plays a central role in Egan's theory of educational development: a theory which proposes an educational program that

"recapitulates" advances in human understanding. The "stages" or forms of human understanding, for Egan, are the Mythic, Romantic, Philosophic, and Ironic. Each form of human understanding carries appropriate kinds of curricular objectives, content, and applications and each roughly matches an age range (proceeding from Mythic in primary years to Ironic in adulthood). It should not come as a surprise that Egan sees the development of the imagination as most important in the development of Romantic understanding.

One of the most important pedagogical paths to educating the imagination, according to Egan, lies in the telling of stories to students but Egan conceives of story-telling as far more than amusing filler for the "real" curricular material. For the middle schooler, these stories should push the boundaries of his or her world and invite the imagination to dwell in far-away lands and sympathize with the exploits of great heroes and heroines (Egan, 1992, pp. 67-89). In Egan's curricular approach, the teacher engages the imagination of the child with a story suited to the child's developmental level (with middle school age children this is the Romantic with stories of adventure and limit-testing) and weaves curriculum "content" into the narrative itself. Thus, as I saw Egan demonstrate to a class of education graduate students, the teacher can teach about global weather patterns, marine biology, and European history while telling an "adventure" story about the breeding grounds of a common European river eel.

Like Frye and Arnold before him, Egan wants education to awaken students to the best that has been thought and said. An insightful historian of

education and educational ideas, Egan argues for the infusion of history in all the disciplines (Egan, 1992). He also links the education of the imagination to moral wisdom. Echoing Frye's concern for an education that enables individuals to think *as individuals* Egan writes, "The greater our imaginative power, it would seem to follow, the greater our moral autonomy. To go along with the crowd, to fit in, to do the conventional, is in part due to not *realizing* the possible alternatives open to us" (Egan, 1992, p. 165).

It is this power, the ability to think of the possible, that Egan argues is the "educable" imagination. Egan is careful, after tracing the history of the concept, to avoid conceptualizing the imagination as a particular faculty within the mind responsible for perceptual organization in the manner of Hume, Kant, or Coleridge. His language, however, does on several occasions show Romantic and even pre-Romantic influences. In his book entitled *Imagination in Teaching and Learning: The Middle School Years*, Egan writes, "Imaginativeness is not a well-developed, distinct function of the mind, but is rather a particular flexibility which can invigorate all mental functions" (Egan, 1992, p. 36). This compares favorably with Hume's conception of the imagination as the "vivacity of ideas" (Engell, 1981, p. 53). Like Wordsworth long before him, Egan argues that the imagination "is not distinct from rationality but is rather a capacity that greatly enriches rational thinking" (Egan, 1992, p. 43).

Egan wishes to keep the value of the Romantic imagination, especially as the primary tool of the free-thinker, but discard the outdated faculty psychology of Romantic thinkers. In as sweeping a vision for the imagination as Coleridge or

Shelley's, Egan argues that the key to memory, morality, social virtue, and freedom lies in the education of the imagination through the sophistication of the intellect with a storehouse of knowledge, and "tools of understanding" (Egan, 1992, pp. 45-65).¹ By equipping students with knowledge and also the various tools -- we might broadly say habits, dispositions, and attitudes as well as strategies -- with which to make use of this knowledge we equip them with an *effective individuality*.

Kieran Egan, I believe, provides the most ambitious account of the educated imagination that we have in recent educational theory. It is ambitious, in part, because it tries to resolve the tension that has characterized pedagogy of the imagination since the Romantic imagination was introduced into educational theory. By focusing on the engagement of the imagination rather than its uncontrolled use, Egan effectively bypasses the tension between freedom and control inherent to the work of Montessori, Froebel, Pestalozzi, and others.¹

What is not clear in Egan is also what is not clear in all the theorists covered in this chapter: why we should believe that there is anything of merit in the engagement of *the* imagination in and of itself (beyond, as Egan argues, better recall of facts). If we are to take the imagination as a "something" -- as a part of the mind we can reasonably talk about as separate with discrete functions -- we also assume the burden of showing evidence that educational "treatments" can effectively improve the functioning of the imagination. If we are, on the other

¹ Egan has, in his most recent book *The Educated Mind*, focused much more closely on how he wishes to understand what is being developed by his methods. He acknowledges that his educational theory calls for both guidance and constraint of the imagination (Egan, 1997).

hand, to understand the imagination as more of a metaphor we cannot possibly argue that certain practices “improve it”. Or, at least, we can press those who wish to contain their talk about the imagination to “metaphoric” language to give us a better sense of what stands behind the metaphors. As I shall argue in the next chapter, our continuing use of the imagination -- as a concept that can be developed, sophisticated, and improved -- draws us into a causal scheme. We are left with the following kinds of questions: What is the educationally beneficial result of stimulating the imagination? What is the educationally beneficial result of encountering other worlds and other personae? It is difficult to find concrete answers to these questions -- difficult because although we still find the Romantic associations with the concept of the imagination we no longer can depend on the faculty psychology of the Romantics to support the causal links between engagement with nature, ideas, or creative expression and the growth of a specifiable power-in-the-mind.

CONCLUSION

"It seems generally agreed that imagination is a good thing and that it ought to be stimulated and developed in education" writes Kieran Egan on the first page of his book, *Imagination in Teaching and Learning* (Egan, 1992, p. 1). Egan's generalization is, I believe, an accurate one about education discourse in the 20th century, regardless of which tradition informs the education “dialectic” in

¹ In many ways, Egan's account is quite distant from the Romanticism of other modern speakers for the imagination in educational discourse.

question. A number of traditions have built curricular arguments around this assumption.

If we believe, as did Shelley and other Romantics, that the imagination is a mind-muscle which is exercised by the combination of sense-impressions or ideas then we can conclude that great works of art are indeed educative in-and-of themselves. We can also conclude, as did Coleridge and Wordsworth, that such exercise has basic benefits in developing the power to create great works of art. Or, we can echo Shelley's confidence in the power of the imagination to empathize with others.

No serious contemporary education thinker, however, would be likely to accept the "old" Romantic account of the imagination and its development. We have, instead, the various accounts covered in this chapter. On the one hand, we have the somewhat vague understanding of the imagination as our inner assemblage of the world and our ability to think against the grain. Such an account is found in Frye but implied, I think, throughout the tradition from Arnold through the New Criticism. We have warrant to "sophisticate" this capacity, through contact with the great imaginations of "great" writers, because we understand the upshot to be social betterment. On the other hand, we have arguments about the importance of creative expression as a means to reach out from individual to individual and from individual to the world. Here vicarious experience and self-expansion provide the rationale for the development of imagination with the arts. Since the Romantics, the imagination itself has become even more potently conceived. We have, for example, in Greene and

Warnock -- and possibly I.A. Richards as well -- the construal of the imagination as the meaning-making power of the human mind in a world where there is no meaning independent of that power.

Yet there is a significant difference between the use to which the Romantics put the concept of the imagination and the use to which it has been put in either the literature-social argument or the individualistic argument. Although all the thinkers touched upon in this chapter follow within the spirit of the Romantic imagination, they inherit the dilemma that faced Maria Montessori. How can the imagination be schooled and left free at the same time? Wordsworth conceived of the imagination as that which was most properly “educated” alongside streams and in the rolling mountains of the Lake District. The Matthew Arnolds and Northrop Fries of literature education seek to ensure cultural continuity and an humanized public through *shaping* the imagination. The Ruth Mocks and Maxine Greens of art education seek individuality, creative freedom, and empathetic communication through opportunities for *directed* expression.

We might think that a modern Shelley or Blake, for example, would wish to throw open (or raze) the walls of the public school. None of the thinkers covered in this last chapter wish to do this, of course. Why not? The answer lies, I believe, in the fact that although they inherit, to various degrees, the Romantic imagination they are also all *educators*. They are interested in schooling and improving public schooling. They are interested in preserving

what they believe is valuable in literature, the arts, or cultural forms of understanding. The imagination is a placeholder, an argumentative strategy.

We may find some illustrative examples of the “placeholder effect” if we, in essence, “take out” the imagination from the curricular arguments found in such thinkers as Frye, Rosenblatt, Mock, and Egan.

Frye offers us literature for the masses. Rather than training the imagination, literature smoothes out cultural-linguistic differences and gives everyone a common vocabulary. Ideally, such an expanded linguistic capacity would yield an expanded capacity to make democratic public argument.

Rosenblatt, I believe, provides a model of teaching literature that has great potential to keep people *interested* in reading. She locates the teaching of literature as a good place to also teach about empathy and moral wisdom -- as a place to do certain kinds of anthropology and psychology.

Mock wishes to emphasize the importance of creative expression and, perhaps unfortunately, emphasize the emotional and expressive as opposed to the analytic or rational. She argues for a renewed call for integration and appreciation when analysis, criticism, and the fragmentary seem to hold the field in art.

Egan suggests that we match our curriculum and our pedagogical “delivery” to the child’s stage of development. He notices that children, especially those in the middle-school age range, are fascinated by the wild, the distant, and the fantastic. Thus Egan recommends a curriculum rich in such things and delivered in the form of engaging stories. The most important upshot

of such pedagogy, for Egan, is that the students will remember what they learn and be interested in learning more. Students equipped with tools of understanding that they can use and strategies and facts they remember are more likely to resist “conventional” ideas.

Stripped of the concept of the imagination, there are still educationally meaningful arguments in what these thinkers have to say. In fact, I would argue, get much closer to the *point* of the arguments and the kinds of hopes they have for the public school. We are better able to position these thinkers; to know how their pedagogical recommendations connect to their politics, their ethics, their aesthetics. We are better able to see who, or what, they are arguing against.

That the concept of the imagination is so attractive to use, however, should come as no surprise. Many within the modern school system are likely to endorse the “imagination” given the level to which Romanticism saturates the language of children and education. The imagination serves as wonderful wrapping paper. Few who write about public education are inclined to argue in such a way as to alienate large portions of the audience. Those who believe in the public school system will likely want to present arguments for forms of education that are good for all students regardless of political, religious, or moral differences. The “educated” imagination is one very powerful way to make such arguments.

It is no secret the public school curriculum, as a location of ideological and cultural struggle, propagates dominant cultural values. The worth of any artform, and its status as a means toward moral, mental, or social sophistication, is part

of a legacy of Euro-Western cultural preference. It is more than just a matter of the preferred Canon -- a Canon currently the subject of ongoing hot debate -- but a matter of the perceived value of art itself. Our confidence in the power of good books to “open our minds” is much more related to cultural dominance than experience-tested knowledge. Equally, our confidence in the power of paintings or music to open new worlds to our eyes and ears lies on ground that any empirically-minded educational measurement specialist could undercut rather easily. These are the confidences of socially and politically dominant Western cultural groups. This does not mean that literature and art cannot fundamentally change people. Literature and art are perhaps very good tools with which culture can be perpetuated.

Percy Shelley, in his *Defense of Poesy*, was reacting to the overwhelmingly stylistic concerns of Classicism and Neo-Classicism. For Shelley, and other Romantics such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, poetry needed affirmation as morally transformative and poets needed their voices as moral teachers and prophets restored. What is being protected in the defense of great literature, especially as a tool of moral improvement, now, however, are certain cultural values and conceptions of the self and the moral -- cultural values largely owned by the industrialized middle class (see, especially, Eagleton, 1990). What is being protected in the affirmation of the power of literature or other creative forms to transcend boundaries between self and other is the Romantic conception of self (and importance attached to it).

We might begin to tease out the consequences of skepticism, rather than confidence, in the value -- expressed in terms of moral or mental sophistication -- of art. Such skepticism does not spell the end of the arts in the public school curriculum. But there are some serious consequences. If you accept my line of questioning you will also, I think, have to put serious questions to certain very common and popular educational practices. Among such practices may be the handing of pen and paper (or computer workstation) to students and tell them simply to express themselves in poetic form with the aim being self-discovery or the development of general poetic sympathies. Such pedagogy would be the worst form of extension of theorists such as Rosenblatt or Greene. I think we must also seriously examine ourselves as readers who are (at least in the case of this author) firmly empowered by dominant cultural norms.

Chapter Four: The S/killing of the Imagination

In this chapter I wish to zero in on the approach to the imagination in education that is most common in educational discourse. It is the conceptualization of imagination, especially prominent in literature on children's play, as a kind of mental "skill" that both requires and demands curricular and pedagogical attention for successful training. The "skilling" of the imagination, I shall argue, culminates the final movement in education away from the revolutionary vision of the Romantics toward an imagination that is ideologically neutral and de-politicized. It is an approach which, ironically, has its origin in one of the most socially-minded proponents of progressive education reform: John Dewey.

Dewey found much of value in the creative imagination, so much so that he called it at one point "the medium of appreciation in all fields" (Dewey, 1944, p. 236). Indeed, Dewey saw so much value in the imagination that he wished to make it fully acceptable and natural to encourage it in public education. He brought the imagination into his theory of education as an *instrument* for pedagogical effectiveness, as a route toward experiential learning where direct experience is impossible.

Contemporary progressives and child-centered educators have combined advances in empirical psychology with the Deweyan emphasis on activity, student participation, and an experiential curriculum. They have produced one

of the most persuasive accounts of the educational value of the imagination -- as a particular, isolatable, and “exerciseable” mental ability or skill that enhances a child’s overall intellectual and emotional wellness. I shall look at the work of a number of writers working within child-centered education theory and psychology of education in this chapter.

DEWEY AND THE IMAGINATION PUT TO USE

John Dewey, for good or ill, has been credited more than any other figure with the birth of progressive educational theory. A clear understanding of Dewey’s thought on anything has always been difficult given his own changes-of-mind in his enormous corpus of writings on philosophy, psychology, and education. Unlike Colonel Francis Parker from whom he certainly took some lead on the educational value of the imagination, Dewey lived well into the 20th century and was particularly sensitive to the effects of material change in American society. He was more influenced than Parker by the wide-spread ramifications of Darwinism and the Darwinistic educational theory of Herbert Spencer as well as the social theory of his friend George Herbert Mead. Dewey’s familiarity with the growing strength of behavioristic thinking and sociology set him on a different path from Parker and allowed him to develop a very different understanding of the creative imagination.

Dewey was, however, as interested in artistic expression and the imagination as Parker. Dewey was familiar with the wide-range of theorists who

had "produced" the Romantic imagination -- Wordsworth, Coleridge, Kant, Fichte, Schelling -- and was deeply influenced by the British Romantic poets as well as Ralph Waldo Emerson (Goodman, 1990, pp. 90-124). He was also well-studied in the European heritage of progressivism, especially Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart, and Spencer. In 1897, Dewey published one of his earliest summaries of his pedagogy in *The School Journal*, an influential education periodical that was also a home for Colonel Parker's writings. In the article, we find Dewey's emphasis on the social nature of schooling and the influence of Darwin and Spencer in his scientism (Dewey, 1897). We also find, however, statements concerning the importance of the "image":

The image is the great instrument of instruction. What a child gets out of any subject presented to him is simply the images which he himself forms with regard to it. If nine-tenths of the energy at present directed toward making the child learn certain things were spent in seeing to it that the child was forming proper images, the work of instruction would be indefinitely facilitated. Much of the time and attention now given to the preparation and presentation of lessons might be more wisely and profitably expended in training the child's power of imagery. (Dewey, 1897, p. 92)

Dewey wanted to move away from a simplistic "faculty" view of the imagination and toward incorporating the image-forming power into his theory of

experience (Goodman, 1990, pp. 121-122). Thus, as in the above quotation and throughout his writings on the imagination, Dewey is careful about his use of words -- using "image", "imagery", "image-making power", and "imaginative" more often than "imagination" (Dewey, 1987, pp. 271-275; Dewey, 1990, pp. 242-254). We also see Dewey's departure from earlier Romantic language in his characteristically pragmatic *instrumentalism* regarding the imagination -- as a useful tool for educational effectiveness.

It was most likely Dewey's pragmatic spirit which made him reluctant to embrace the mysticism of Froebel and others who would take the imagination to spiritual heights. He argues: "It is sometimes thought the use of the imagination is profitable in the degree it stands for very remote metaphysical and spiritual principles. In the great majority of such cases it is safe to say that the adult deceives himself" (Dewey, 1960, p. 124). In true Deweyan form, he gives us little idea in what cases the adult would *not* deceive himself to place this degree of importance on the imagination. Yet it is safe to say based on Dewey's sentiments here and elsewhere that he wants to confine the "imagination" to acts of perception, appreciation, and expression and not to extend it to any quasi-spiritual process by which humans contact the divine (either in the form of God or Nature). In *Democracy and Education*, for example, Dewey argues: "Unfortunately, it is too customary to identify the imaginative with the imaginary, rather than with a warm and intimate taking in of the full scope of a situation. This leads to an exaggerated estimate of fairy tales, myths, fanciful symbols, verse, and something labeled 'Fine Art.'" (Dewey, 1944, p. 236).

We might close the book on Dewey and the imagination here if not for the fact that Dewey placed a great deal of emphasis on the power to form images. While he differs from the likes of Parker, Coleridge, or Froebel in the weight he gives to the faculty of the "imagination" and to the value of poetry or art in its cultivation, he gives monumental significance to the power to call images to mind. In lectures delivered at Brigham Young in 1901, Dewey specifically addressed the educational value of the imagination. He cautions on several occasions that he is not concerned with a "vague mysterious power of making up things or dealing with the unreal and fantastic" but proceeds to argue that the power to envision is central to all educational disciplines (Dewey, 1990, pp. 242-254).

He provides examples in arithmetic, geography, science, and history where the ability on the student's part to form an image of what is not present in the lesson will render the curriculum content more meaningful (especially more memorable). The thrust of Dewey's reasoning lies in his conviction, expressed in almost every one of his major works, that what is learned best is that which is most readily available to the senses. Visualization and the power of the "constructive imagination" (a phrase he does use) lies in its ability to bring the student into a kind of sensory contact with the subject matter. Dewey summarizes, "The chief point I wish to make is, that imagery in this sense is the chief instrumentality in the pupils' minds upon which the teacher has to rely when dealing with facts and material that is not directly present to their senses" (Dewey, 1990, p.242).

In Dewey's treatment of the imagination, however, we also see a serious blow to the value of the imagination as *Imagination* -- the faculty valued so highly by the Romantics. Dewey's visualizing is a far cry from Blake's divine spirit or Wordsworth's metaphor of Mount Snowdon at sunrise. In Dewey, the imagination, or to be precise, the ability to form images, is an educationally important mental capacity. It is not a power to re-invent the world or the power to unify self and nature. It is a power to solve puzzles or to make interesting shapes with blocks. To be fair, social change was always an important topic for Dewey as was creative self-expression. Yet, as is the case with much of his work, his educational suggestions on the imagination leave much room for practical implementation without the corresponding "deep" philosophical perspectives. In particular, the move found in Dewey can be taken to be the ultimate reversal of the importance of imagination in Wordsworth. Instead of imagination being the highest expression of reason, in Dewey we find the image-forming power to be the handmaiden of logical thought. The "visionary power" has been stripped of its import if not its literal meaning. Imagination has been given an instrumentality (to use Dewey's word) that does not seem to correspond with the use of it in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Blake, or even Emerson.

While this instrumentality effectively solves the tension between the individualism of the Romantic imagination and the social dimension of schooling, it does so only by sacrificing the spiritualism and idealism of Romantic thinking about the imagination. While there may be good reasons to question Romantic idealism, Dewey does not do this. He confers upon the imagination a status

which no one could reasonably argue against. Dewey may not have intended to do so, but he took an important step toward rendering the imagination innocent and socially neutral.

THE “S/KILLED” IMAGINATION

I want now to turn attention to the influence of modern empirical psychology, cognitive and developmental psychology in particular, on education - a tradition of modern inquiry and argument that can most likely be credited with once again firmly establishing talk of the imagination in mainstream education discourse and a tradition that, in its child-centered pedagogy, is the primary inheritor of Deweyan progressivism. Ironically, I wish to suggest, it is empirical psychology in its various forms that most severely damages the value of the imagination as seen by the Romantics. The strength of modern empirical psychology, especially in education, is its status (however contested) as a science capable of generating and testing empirical truths. The “case” for the imagination within this tradition has the advantage of being perceived as grounded in countless hours of observation and research.

Theoretical and practical work in early experimental psychology, developmental psychology, and psychoanalysis has allowed educators to imbue the imagination with empirical status. This, however, is not the imagination of the Romantics. It is an imagination of mental “constructs”, abstract and “horizontal” thinking, a meaning found in the relationship between the developing

mind and the environment. It is a meaning that is also often stripped of philosophic depth and curricular vision for the sake of research validity and policy-making power. Empirical psychology has turned the imagination into an object worthy of study, observation, research, and schooling. Consequently, it has reduced much of the talk about the pedagogy of the imagination to questions of *how* -- how to build, engage, expand, etc. Questions of why and for what purpose are largely left unraised and unanswered.

It could be said that educational psychology began as philosophy with new, powerful ammunition -- Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. The Darwinian understanding of the dynamic relationship between organism and environment cleared new paths for those wishing to investigate human development and the human mind with hard scientific method -- statistics, observation, and testing. It is a legacy with a Jekyll-Hyde nature. While educational psychology has turned our attention to children and their worlds in revolutionary ways, it has also been closely linked with eugenics (a term coined by experimental psychologist Sir Francis Galton -- cousin to Darwin) and the "science" of realizing perfection for nations and races. Empirical psychology of education has searched for an understanding of human mental development so that educational "treatments" and "interventions" may be devised to *improve* development.

Early in this century, educational psychologists turned their attention to mental "processes", looking for ways to understand, differentiate, and ultimately improve mental performance and function. Alfred Binet, in France, would devise

the first scientifically rigorous tests of intelligence -- yielding the educational “boon” of the I.Q. test. In the United States, Edward Thorndike emphasized the “laws of learning” that would allow mental “connections” and consequently learning to proceed rapidly and effectively (Thorndike, 1921). Thorndike proposed a “connectionist” understanding of learning that makes so much initial sense that it is still widely acceptable today. The use and “exercise” of the mind in making connections between stimuli and responses furthers learning and retention. Disuse hampers learning. Thus mathematics tables exercise the mind’s ability to connect mathematical problems and correct answers. Thorndike took educational psychology in the United States down the first steps on the road to mental “skills” -- the idea, wildly popular today, that education is the development and training of particular kinds of mental operations. He did not do it single-handedly, however. Notions of use, growth, and mental connection were also important for John Dewey and G. Stanley Hall, sharing with Thorndike an influence from William James.

The importance of early experimental psychology in the history of the schooling of the imagination lay in the *scientific* validation of the Romantic language of exercise and use. Edwin Kirkpatrick prefaces his thorough, encompassing, experimentally-informed *Imagination and its Place in Education* (1921) with the comment:

Psychology seeks to present what is true of all minds, but in no type of mental activity is there greater individuality than in the

exercise of the imagination. The writer, in his many years of teaching psychology, has enjoyed this subject because tests given students and their reports of introsubjective studies show that the same laws govern all minds, though they are partly disguised by an infinite variety of image combinations. (Kirkpatrick, 1921, p. iii)

Backed with the notion that learning involved the use and exercise of mental functions, early American psychology of education had an easy answer for the education of the imagination -- get children to imagine. For Dewey, as we saw earlier, it was the exercise of appreciation in all areas of inquiry. For Kirkpatrick, it was the stimulation of the image-forming capacity in all areas of the curriculum (Kirkpatrick, 1921).

It would, however, be modern developmental psychology which would surpass and replace earlier psychological approaches in education. Cognitive-developmental psychology is largely an outgrowth of the work of two theorists in much different worlds: Jean Piaget, in interwar and post-WWII Switzerland, and Lev Vygotsky in post-revolutionary Russia. Both theorists attempted to understand the development of the human mind through observation and experimentation. Both were influenced by a number of areas of inquiry outside psychology -- philosophy, anthropology, social theory, and, of course, evolutionary biology. The fine differences between Piagetian and Vygotskian cognitive developmental theory are still a matter of long and involved discussion and debate, but there are a few important points of comparison. Both Piaget and

Vygotsky argue that children develop mentally through interaction with their environment and proceed through identifiable levels of mental ability; Piaget focuses more on "objects" in the child's environment and the child's ability to make use of those objects and apply sophisticated concepts to those objects while Vygotsky emphasizes the social environment of the child (Pellegrini, 1987, p. 136).

The influence of both Piaget and Vygotsky on educational theory has been profound and it is probably fair to say that it is difficult to *avoid* cognitive-developmental psychology in any academic study of education (especially early childhood education). Although Piaget, especially, has received much critical scrutiny since the publication of his major works, contemporary developmental psychology still owes an enormous debt to his basic formulation of mental maturation (Sugarman, 1987). A number of influential writers have advanced theories along Piagetian and Vygotskian lines -- Jerome Bruner, Margaret Donaldson, Howard Gardner to name but a few of the most prominent (Bruner, 1962; Donaldson, 1978; Gardner, 1991). In general, these works have only strengthened the drive to understand the developing mind of the child and have emphasized the need to understand how the child makes sense of the world.

Donaldson, aiming her work directly at teachers and parents, argues for a renewed effort at matching education to the child: "[T]eachers need to be clear not only about what they would like children to become under their guidance but about what children are actually like when the process is begun" (Donaldson, 1978, p. 15). Donaldson's recommendation can be taken as indicative of the

influence of developmental psychology in education today. The project of developmental psychology, in application to education, has been essentially a Rousseauian one: to understand the "nature" of the child and thus match education to nature.

What, then, does developmental psychology have to say about the imagination? Directly, not very much. In fact, Piaget was expressly opposed to the idea that there was such a thing as the imagination, and against the older notion that it could be "exercised" in any meaningful way. Both Piaget and Vygotsky, however, argue that imaginative games and play do have significant value in child development, primarily as a precursor to higher thought processes. Piaget discusses the ability to form images as essential to the growing power to think in the abstract -- part of the mind's power to manipulate the world -- but he comments on the imagination in the context of imaginative games:

What is the function of such games? It would require a large dose of theoretical belief to see in them a continuous tendency to pre-exercise. The child is exercising his present life far more than pre-exercising future activities. Can he be said to be pre-exercising his "imagination," imagination being viewed as a faculty to be developed like intelligence itself? Hardly, since the subsequent evolution of symbolic imagination will consist in its decrease in favour of representational tools more adapted to the real world.

(Piaget, 1962, pp. 130-131)

Children, according to Piaget, move from an awareness of only self (egocentrism) to an awareness of the world and self as separate entities. Early childhood imaginative games and play serve to help children learn to separate self from world and begin to think in the abstract -- to conceptualize. For Vygotsky, imaginary play is a developmental milestone signaling the child's ability to govern his or her own behavior by rules, meanings, and "perceptions" not immediately present (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 93-94).

Although the human capacity for image-making is important to each theorist, neither is prone to romanticizing the faculty of imagination -- the demand for "scientific" style and method in their work and their theoretical allegiance to evolutionary accounts of Nature and organism remove them from the language of the Romantics. This has not stopped subsequent developmental theorists and researchers from doing so (as we shall see a bit later), however, for modern developmental psychology, in usurping the status of behaviorism in education, re-opened a door closed early in the century.¹ The door is that of the mind. Whereas behaviorists were skeptical of any effort to study the inner workings of the mind, the psychology of cognitive development once again allows thinkers to ask questions about the relationship between inner nature and outer Nature -- questions of central importance to all the Romantics and especially important to progressive education reformers.

¹ Partly, also, contemporary developmental psychologists interested in the imagination and imaginative play have been helped by general critique of Piaget's egocentrism and his consequent "underestimation" of the importance of imaginative play for children.

Following the lead of Piaget and Vygotsky, contemporary psychologists have turned attention to the child at play. Research into children's play, and imaginative games in particular, has not only made many careers for modern researchers but has formed a bridge between the child-centered theory of the early progressive reformers and present educational theory and practice. Early childhood developmental psychologists Barbara Tizard and Martin Hughes write:

The value of learning through play was first put forward by the German educationalist Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852). The kindergarten and nursery school movement which developed from his writings freed young children from the tyranny of sitting in rows chanting and writing their ABC. Much later, Piaget provided a psychological justification for the doctrine, by arguing that the child's active exploration of a wide variety of objects is an essential precursor of later verbal and cognitive understanding. These ideas are now taken very much as axiomatic within the world of early childhood education. (Tizard and Hughes, 1984, pp. 40-41)

Hughes and Tizard certainly draw a too-straight line between Froebel and cognitive psychology but the point is more the surface relationship and how it is perceived. Modern developmental psychology has perhaps almost single-handedly recovered early child-centered education theory from the mid-century influences of behaviorism and the technology-heavy, discipline-based curriculum

initiated in the face of the communist "threat." It has once again made it respectable, even politically necessary in certain academic and practical circles, to talk of the "active" mind of the child and to emphasize creative and imaginative expression in school contexts.

The various positions on the creative imagination articulated in early American "connectionism" and experimental psychology, psychoanalysis, and developmental psychology have provided a great deal of theoretical respectability to contemporary study of the imagination in education. In a number of places we find a mixing of these psychological "dialectics", perhaps as a result of the perception that the greater and more expansive the "research base" the greater the theoretical power. With the added theoretical clout of modern psychological treatments of mind and human development, education authors with a neo-progressive bent once again bring in Dewey, or Froebel (as in the above quote from Tizard and Hughes) to fully solidify the worth of an "activity" curriculum.

Imagination often serves as a weapon through which such neo-progressivist authors can strike at a number of educational and societal evils. Dorothy and Jerome Singer, two of the most prominent experts on the imagination in psychology of children's play, have positioned their understanding of the imagination squarely against television-viewing. They suggest that television may stunt the development of the child's imagination -- leaving a child incapable of calling up images of his or her own (Singer and Singer, 1990, p. 194). Their book, *The House of Make Believe: Play and the Developing*

Imagination, makes use of a broad selection of psychological theory (from Freud to Vygotsky) to stress the importance of imaginative play in children (Singer & Singer, 1990). Singer and Singer identify the imagination as the "realm of the possible" without going much more into detail on exactly how they wish to conceptualize the imagination. They do, however, go into a great deal of detail on children's imaginative play (fantasy-life, imaginary friends, etc.). The qualitative taken-as-given is that the "imaginative" life of a child is a product of the imagination and a "healthy" imaginative life indicates a healthy imagination. Passivity, including hours in front of the T.V., stunts the liveliness of a growing imagination. Activity, and active imaginative play, stimulates the imagination.

This formula is omni-present in psychologically-influenced literature for educators on the imagination, or its contemporary sister concept, creativity and the importance of play (Isenberg and Jalongo, 1993; Berk, 1994; Mann, 1994). Among the arguments are renewed calls for the importance of the arts (Jalongo, 1990) and calls for an education for the "whole" child (Jalongo, 1990; Wilson, 1994). The language of the *exercise* of the imagination is often explicit if not implicit. In her teacher handbook, Leslie Owen Wilson indexes a particular activity called the no-peeking box in which students must feel textures inside a closed box as "imagination, exercise for" (Wilson, 1994).

The assumption often seems to be, as Isenberg and Jalongo write in their work *Creative Expression and Play in the Early Childhood Curriculum*, that "being creative is an end in itself, just like being healthy" (Isenberg & Jalongo, 1993, p. 13). The authors here note Mary Warnock's suggestion that

“imaginative” belongs in the same conception category as words such as “healthy” -- that there is little need for justification for the fostering of imagination and creativity in children (Warnock, 1977).

We might be inclined to think that this area of education literature -- running the theoretical spectrum from Dewey to Vygotsky, is the greatest boon possible to a re-invigorated conception of the Romantic, creative imagination. This is certainly the case for many current child-centered educators. The developmental “worth” of the imagination makes it a good sell: while watching Sesame Street with my daughter I have noticed numerous “skits” exhorting the viewer to just “use your imagination!”; not to mention Lego, which, I am sure is happy to have a psychologically valid language with which to market its product.

The price psychology of education has had to pay, however, for its selling power in contemporary talk of the imagination in education is the *reason* for educating the imagination. The mix of a number of psychological traditions has resulted not only in conceptual fuzziness about what exactly the imagination is, but rather vague notions of why it is important to educate for imagination and creativity. Imagination has been turned into a viable object of “development” in the curriculum with a myriad of strategies for its development -- from arts and crafts, no-peeking boxes, fantasy literature, pretend play, to unstructured block-building. Imagination is an educationally valuable ability that can be tested, measured, and potentially improved (Singer, 1973). Yet, this objectification of the imagination has turned almost all attention to the various strategies for improving and testing its development. The Romantic understanding of the

imagination as carrying the power to transform society is, if mentioned at all, linked to effective school policy change (see, for example, Isenberg and Jalongo, 1993, p. 340-341). Just as early progressives struggled with the tension between the Romantic imagination and the contained environment of the classroom, contemporary psychological models of the imagination in education must sacrifice revolutionary vision for policy-making persuasiveness.

We find an imagination, in this corpus of work on childhood, that fits the subject: it is an imagination that is innocent. It is seen in the creative block-building activities of children or their gleeful answers to questions about what might be inside the “no-peeking box”. But, we might ask, if being imaginative and creative is truly like being healthy and the free use of our imagination is what is truly important, why should we discourage children from inventing traps to catch and kill rodents, for example? Educators such as Singer and Singer wish to keep children away from the television to both protect the innocent imagination and foster “better” sources of imagination-development such as creative games and books. But, we might wonder, are creative games and books necessarily good food for the imagination? Is the “active” aspect in reading so beneficial that we would unquestioningly hand racist propaganda to students over informative television about science or history?

CONCLUSION

I find myself, much to my initial chagrin, in agreement with the *first line of attack* in E.D. Hirsch Jr.’s blistering assault on current “progressivist” curricular

strategies in his widely-read and widely-critiqued book *Cultural Literacy* (1987). Hirsch Jr. recognizes what I also believe is the primary problem with the kind of thinking about the imagination that has come out of the neo-progressivist union of early progressivism with developmental psychology and the celebration of the individuality of the child.

To argue for the restoration of a common curriculum that is rich in cultural heritage, Hirsch targets the idea that what is important about education is the “skills” that are learned and exercised in the locale of the school rather than the solid learning of enculturating materials. He writes, “The formalistic educational theory behind the shopping mall school (the theory that any suitable content will inculcate reading, writing, and thinking skills) has had certain political advantages for school administrators. It has allowed them to stay scrupulously neutral with regard to content” (Hirsch, Jr., 1987, p. 21). I have argued similarly, emphasizing the role that the importation of the Romantic imagination into the public school curriculum has played in this faith.

This is not to blame Dewey, however, since he certainly did have a vision of social progress and community behind his educational theory. Equally, many “progressive” followers of Dewey certainly stripped away a great deal of Dewey’s philosophical backing for his pedagogical principles. Dewey, rather, made available a certain way of talking about imagination, growth and development in education that has been picked up recently by educators whose confidence in Deweyan methods does not always seem equally informed by an understanding of the larger purposes for those methods. Harriet Cuffaro, for

example, in her book *Experimenting with the World: John Dewey and the Early Childhood Classroom*, expresses a Romantic confidence in the imagination when she writes, “To imagine is to possess power -- to transform, to change the given” (Cuffaro, 1995, p. 96). Cuffaro’s curricular suggestions, however, seem to end at the “use of blocks in a group setting where children are free to bring their own interests and questions into play” (Cuffaro, 1995, p. 96). Cuffaro throws all her pennies into the well of “[u]nstructured materials and activities that encourage children to freely give of themselves” (Cuffaro, 1995, p. 96).

I do think that the ideological neutrality that accompanies the “skills” curriculum, the slogans of “just use your imagination”, and the recommendations to play with building blocks takes us far away from any sensible picture of the greater social and cultural role of education. I do not think, however, that the problem is the lack of a common core, value-laden, curriculum -- especially the kind Hirsch recommends for all American citizens. Rather, I think that the culprit is the toothlessness of the educational vision implied by the skills curriculum -- or, we might say the ideological neutrality of the skills themselves. Even if we can meaningfully generalize the skill of imagination and see its ramifications in all aspects of learning and life (I shall directly argue against this later), we are not offered much reason to think that it is important for any particular kinds of problems. The vision, I think it safe to gloss, is one of every child being equally prepared to do anything. I would suggest that what we have is a vision of every child being equally prepared to do nothing in particular.

To avoid contention and political dissonance in the strategies of early childhood and primary education, the imagination has been offered as an educational promised land where every child is given the skills for whatever he or she might want to do in life.¹ In contrast, I want students to graduate from public school with the ability to use their “imagination” for particular ends. I want students to graduate from school with the ability and disposition to *question* the sensibility of moral, aesthetic, empirical, and especially *political* claims.

My “wants” here take us beyond the critique of current educational discourse on the imagination, however, and into the reconstructive portion of this investigation.

¹ It would be wrong, of course, to say that Sesame Street or psychologists of education such as Singer and Singer are ideologically neutral. Singer and Singer, for example, make extensive and effective use of the concept of the imagination in their arguments about the negative effects of television -- arguments that tap into the cultural spine of most white, middle and upper-class North Americans, I would imagine, who place a great deal of importance on higher levels of literacy. Singer and Singer, I think, are just as concerned about cultural literacy as Hirsch. They are, however, trying to pass their arguments as arguments about the *nature* of the child rather than about what children *should know*.

Part III

How to be Against the Imagination in Education

The purpose of this investigation from the outset has been not only a conceptual change but a conceptual "recovery" of sorts so, despite its title, this final part of my investigation seeks to achieve a kind of phoenix-like death and rebirth for the imagination in education. Although the concept of the imagination, most substantially developed for modern use by the Romantics, misleads us in educational endeavors there is much of value in the Romantic vision -- in the purposes to which various Romantic authors put the imagination. In particular, I think we continually need to remind ourselves of the Romantic language which values social transformation above autocratic rule and human individuality above the industrial machine. While we would not wish to uncritically re-establish the various ideological, spiritual, and intellectual positions of Romantic thinkers, we do, I believe, want to take seriously the possibility that recent pedagogical treatments of the imagination greatly reduce the important relationships between the imagination and freedom, social progress, and individuality that were held up by the Romantics.

We head off, therefore, in a very different direction in the next two chapters, moving through deconstructive to constructive and reconstructive arguments about the pedagogy of the imagination. The ultimate aim is to move from the imagination to the imaginative, and argue for the value of the *imaginative* in education. This move, I believe, will help us past both the ideological and conceptual difficulties surrounding the use of the concept of

imagination in education but do so in a way that reinstates some of the important insights about individuality, freedom, and creative expression found in Romantic theorists.

The stakes have always been high and likely always will be. William Blake saw the human imagination, realized and strengthened through artistic creation, as the key to personal freedom and the contemplation of the divine (Engell, 1981). We might also remind ourselves of Shelley's confidence in the imagination as the "great instrument of moral good." Educational thought, from the early child-centered pedagogy of Pestalozzi and Froebel to the liberatory expressivism of Maxine Greene and the socio-political vision of Northrop Frye, has capitalized upon the vocabulary of freedom and individuality spawned by the language of the Romantic imagination.

It is the vibrancy and continued strength of this vocabulary that is at risk in contemporary education discourse. While we might find a number of the thinkers examined in the previous three chapters guilty of various unfounded confidences in the imagination, we cannot fault them for having a lack of educational vision. Educational vision, as the firm commitment to bringing about educational practice that is personally and socially transformative, is what is most lacking in the rising prominence of instrumentalism and market-mindedness in education policy. The imagination, served up as a cognitive "skill" to be tested, measured, and lauded as a successful educational "outcome", is becoming an educationally inert concept. By "inert" I mean it is becoming a

morally, intellectually, and aesthetically neutral concept and as such has completed its separation from the language of the Romantics.

The question, then, is whether or not the imagination can and should be "recharged." I do not think it should. The imagination is a concept that has run its course in the history of human understanding as something which has accepted empirical meaning. Rather than re-invent the concept of imagination, we should recognize that in speaking about it we are speaking in a particular kind of highly metaphoric idiom¹. We are speaking in the language of the Romantics, a language which has been dramatically altered and largely replaced by modern psychological and philosophical movements. It is enough, however, to simply recognize that the concept of the imagination has slipped into metaphor -- continued dependence on the concept to make curricular arguments weakens both what is good about the Romantic conception of imagination and also weakens the arguments themselves. We need to move past the imagination in educational discourse.

To help us past the "hump" we can turn to a tradition within modern philosophy which has eroded a great deal of the descriptive power of Romantic and pre-Romantic thought through rigorous attacks on the conceptions of mind inherent to Enlightenment and Romantic philosophy: analytic philosophy. Thus Chapter Five will seek to find a language with which we can talk about the concept of imagination itself without falling prey to Romantic assumptions about mind. Chapter Six, however, will suggest a language with which we may continue to value imaginative thought and action -- a language with which we can

arm ourselves against efforts to reduce educational goals to specific learned skills and measurable behavioral "outcomes."

¹ Something Mary Warnock also does (as noted earlier), but without, I believe, the right follow-up.

Chapter Five: The Concept of the Educated Imagination

The first steps toward any change in the language of educational practice involve clear recognition of the basic problems. In the last two chapters I focused attention on the “smokescreen” effect of the use of the imagination. Contemporary educational theorists are, whether intentionally or not, obscuring a number of curricular arguments with the language of general mental improvement or unnecessarily and problematically depending on the concept of the imagination.

What we are led to believe by many contemporary advocates of the educated imagination is that, because imagination is a generally good thing for children (and adults) to possess, anything that “works” or makes use of the imagination is good pedagogy. Thus, as we have seen, we find the imagination attached to recommendations about play, art, literature. The Romantic conception of imagination in educational literature is found within popular areas as well -- usually in its most romanticized and vague forms. In a particular episode of the popular children’s television show, *Barney*, the happy-go-lucky purple dinosaur leads the children through a number of “make-believe” activities with the aim of teaching them how to use their imagination.¹ The imagination is a theme that runs across not just *Barney*, but other children’s shows. Even the staple *Sesame Street* has a sketch in which Ernie “just imagines” he is a knight

¹ The episode is entitled the “Queen of Make-Believe”.

in shining armor, undersea, etc.¹ What remains unclear in such exhortations directed toward young viewers is the same as what is unclear in more sophisticated arguments about the imagination. Why should we use our imagination? What are we really “using” anyway?

I want, in this chapter, to focus in very closely on the language of the educated imagination to try to clear up some of the difficulties associated with the current and past use of the concept in educational and pseudo-educational areas. My attention to the conceptual logic of the educated imagination and the shift from noun (imagination) to adjective (imaginative) may seem overly reductionistic and an example of the worst kind of philosophical hair-splitting. The whole point of advocating the imagination in education, one might say, is to celebrate the expansive, the metaphoric, the creative and not the critical and analytical. There is plenty of the latter in education; don't I miss the boat here?

My best answer to such an accusation will be found in what kind of territory I find through the route of philosophical hair-splitting.² If I am right about the use and mis-use of the concept of imagination in education, we are in a kind of linguistic quicksand. The quicksand is a direct result of the history of the concept. The Romantic imagination has never made a very good bedfellow for schooling.

¹ *Sesame Street*, on its world-wide web page, makes reference to Singer and Singer's work on imagination and the development of imagination at the time I am writing.

² Although I think I would also point out the Romantic bias behind any assumption that the imagination and the imaginative are opposed to clarity and analytic rigor. Surely any theoretical physicist or mathematician (as well as any analytic philosopher) would take issue with the delimitation of imagination to non-analytic endeavors.

In argument about education there are times for all sorts of language -- whether it be polemical, metaphorical, celebratory, or analytic. We are at a point in argument about education and the imagination where polemics, metaphor, and celebration have played important roles and it is time for a bit of analytic clarity.

FROM LAMPS TO LANGUAGE

Part of the difficulty with the contemporary use of the concept of imagination is the legacy of the Romantic understanding of the mind as "lamp-like" in nature -- a mind which shines out its brilliant light of imagination and understanding on the world, creating and recreating meaning and works of beauty from the jumble of sense-impressions. It is a picture of a mind separable into discrete "parts" or faculties with specific functions and a mind with a status *equivalent to*, but *qualitatively different from*, the status of other "objects" in the world. This representation of the "inner" has exerted tremendous power in the history of philosophical and psychological thought in the last three centuries, and, as we have seen, continues to influence various aspects of thought about the place of imagination in education.

Philosopher Gilbert Ryle devoted his widely-read book, *The Concept of Mind*, to curing himself and others of this representation of the "inner" world of the mind. A significant component of the philosophical "healing" required Ryle to argue vehemently against the empirical status of mind that he attributed to the

discipline of psychology. In the last chapter of the book he explains why his thorough study of the language of the mind lacks any reference to psychological literature. He writes:

Now when the word 'psychology' was coined, two hundred years ago, it was supposed that the two-worlds legend was true. It was supposed, in consequence, that since Newtonian science explains (it was erroneously thought) everything that exists and occurs in the physical world, there could and should be just one other counterpart science explaining what exists and occurs in the postulated non-physical world. As Newtonian scientists studied the phenomena of the one field, so there ought to be scientists studying the phenomena of the other field. 'Psychology' was supposed to be the title of the one empirical study of 'mental phenomena' (Ryle, 1966, p. 319).

Ryle, of course, rejected the two-world legend and, in doing so, did more damage to the Romantic conception of imagination than any other "modern" thinker described so far. Indeed, from Piaget to Sartre, we see massive changes in the understanding of the imagination but we also see the preservation of Romantic elements. In Ryle, however, we do not find such preservation.

The attack is so severe primarily because it is aimed directly at the assumption so central to the Romantic conception of the imagination: that the

imagination is a kind of "bridge" or conduit that relates self to the world. For philosophers of the Enlightenment and the Romantics who followed them, the imagination worked, internally, to both make sense out of the world and also to create the new (art and poetry in particular) from what one could see and experience in Nature. The fundamental Cartesian separation between mind and material world was an indispensable cornerstone in the Romantic conception of the imagination. In fact, the Romantic imagination was conceptualized by Coleridge, Shelley, and others as the one way by which humankind can reach out both to others and to Nature -- the one way by which self can overcome the Cartesian schism. Thus for Pestalozzi and Froebel, the imagination was the faculty that needed "development" in order for children to know themselves and their relationship to their God, Nature, and other human beings.

Ryle, as part of the "linguistic turn" in mid-century philosophy, let go of the Cartesian dualism between mind and mental "stuff" and body/nature and bodily/natural "stuff" or at least radically changed its form (Rorty, 1980; Ryle, 1966, pp. 11-23). In essence, Rylean philosophy of language "behaviorized" mind by arguing that whatever "mind" was it was to be seen in our behaviors and especially our language -- as wholly part of the observable and present "world" we inhabit with our bodies.

In the introduction to this investigation I quoted Ludwig Wittgenstein's observation on the "nature" of the imagination as a beacon for the overall project. It is now worth revisiting the words of this other great philosopher of

language to further develop the analytic critique of mind as it directly pertains to the understanding of the "imagination":

One ought to ask, not what images are or what happens when one imagines anything, but how the word 'imagination' is used. But that does not mean that I want to talk only about words. For the question as to the nature of the imagination is as much about the word 'imagination' as my question is. And I am only saying that the question is not to be decided -- neither for the person who does the imagining, nor for anyone else -- by pointing; nor yet by a description of any process (Wittgenstein, 1983, p. 116e).

Wittgenstein and Ryle are not bantering about the use of words *per se* but about the use of words in the context of the logical relationships in language. They are not arguing that "imagination" is the wrong word for talking about certain mental abilities. On the contrary, I think both would agree that imagination is the right *word*. It is rather that the *imagination*, as a conception of something that supposedly exists, is logically problematic in its ties to Cartesian mind/body separation and Enlightenment accounts of mind. The imagination, to put it another way, is problematic only as something with important philosophical and psychological meaning -- as something granted more than just figurative meaning.

Analytic philosophy's best evidence for rejecting empirically meaningful accounts of the imagination is in the actual use of the concept in language. Ryle observes with acumen worth quoting at length:

No one thinks that there exists a nuclear farming operation by the execution of which alone a man is entitled to be called a 'farmer'; but the concepts wielded in theories of knowledge are apt to be less generously treated. It is often assumed that there does exist one nuclear operation in which imagination proper consists; it is assumed, that is, that the judge following the witness's mendacities, and the child playing bears, are both exercising their imaginations only if they are both executing some specifically identical ingredient operation. This supposed nuclear operation is often supposed to be that of seeing things in the mind's eye, hearing things in one's head and so on, i.e. some piece of fancied perceiving. Of course, it is not denied that the child is doing lots of other things as well; he roars, he pads around the floor, he gnashes his teeth and he pretends to sleep in what he pretends is a cave. But, according to this view, only if he sees pictures in his mind's eye of his furry paws, his snowbound den and so on, is he imagining anything (Ryle, 1966, p. 259).

Partly, according to Ryle, it is the fault of philosophers themselves (but mostly psychologists) for warping everyday expressions in language into theories of mind, perception, and knowledge that put "ghosts in the machine" (to use Ryle's most famous term). The ghosts are mental faculties and phenomena, the "machine" is the corporeal body.

Ryle concludes his look at "imagining", and gives a final twist to the knife deep in the heart of the Romantic imagination, with the words: "There is no special Faculty of Imagination, occupying itself single-mindedly in fancied viewings and hearings. On the contrary, 'seeing' things is one exercise of imagination, growling somewhat like a bear is another" (Ryle, 1966, p. 257-258). Ryle carefully avoids the use of the article "the" in the second sentence. He is not arguing that one exercises *the* imagination whatsoever, because Ryle rejects the notion of such a "thing" as imagination. Instead, Ryle is making a claim about the way we *describe* certain behaviors.

Although Ryle and Wittgenstein can give us a new way to speak and think about the imagination, they cannot solve all our problems for us. Despite Ryle's critique of mind almost a half-century ago, people, both within academia and without, have continued to use concepts of mind in ways that blur the distinctions he so convincingly made. Why wasn't everyone convinced?¹

There is simply more to the concept of imagination than meets the "analytic" eye. In particular, there is a two-century history of association with a

¹ In part it may be due to the misplaced over-confidence in the explanatory power of certain kinds of analysis of language -- the belief, rooted in positivistic thinking, that analytic philosophy could provide final word on the status of truth claims in all the disciplines. In Ryle and the early Wittgenstein this sometimes

number of Romantic ideals. The nub of the problem for Ryle may indeed be the Cartesianism inherent in the use of the word imagination to describe some inner process by which images are paraded in front of an "inner" eye. "Imagination", however, is often employed to do much more than that. It has been, since the Romantics, employed as a herald for creativity, individuality, freedom, and the ability to transcend the gaps between self and world. One cannot so casually dismiss the concept of imagination as being systematically misleading without consequently dismissing these associations. Thus Ryle's basic critique of the concept of imagination, and the extended critique of mental entities and inner experience that is at the core of analytic philosophy, may fall on ears unwilling and unable to hear it (as it clearly has done in the discipline of empirical psychology).

Empirical psychology would be safe to say: "We are studying the various human abilities to talk about things not present as if they were present (i.e., what people refer to as mental images), respond emotionally to 'imagined' situations, create art, and speculate about the non-actual. For lack, at this time in the history of psychology, of better words to describe these 'abilities' we shall often refer to them as involving imagination where 'imagination' stands for as-yet-unclear neurological activity."¹ Where empirical psychology strays from its mandate, however, is in the assumption that all these things involve the same neurological activity and that to "condition" one is to condition another. This

manifests as a severe hostility to any psychological reference to the "inner" nature of mind, a hostility that suffers from a lack of strong justification (Rorty, 1979, pp. 216-219).

¹ Here I follow Rorty's examination of the over-criticism by analytic philosophy of the language of psychology in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Rorty, 1979).

mistake causes empirical psychology and many areas within educational psychology to revert to Romantic and pre-Romantic accounts of mind.

A critique of the *concept* of imagination, despite its inability to convince all those who currently talk about "imagination", remains the best route out of ambiguous and misleading language about the "teachability" of the imagination. What is needed, however, to make the critique constructively appealing to those who are not analytic or post-analytic philosophers is a way to rescue what is seen as the educational value of the imagination. We need a way in which we can critique certain assumptions about the imagination without seeming to tyrannize or reductively limit language-use. I think there is such a way. It involves replacing, in educational discourse, talk of the imagination with talk of the imaginative.

SEPARATING IMAGINATION AND IMAGINATIVE

First, I think it important to briefly touch upon possible conceptions of the imagination for future educational practice. If I have been persuasive up to now, our confidence in any kind of essentialism about the imagination should be well-rattled. This is not to say, however, that we should bite our tongues whenever we feel inclined to speak of the imagination or ask someone to imagine something. Expressions such as "the world of imagination" help us discuss aspects of literature, art, or drama in meaningful ways.

I particularly like Northrop Frye's use of the imagination as long as one does not suppose (as Frye seems to have done in the *Educated Imagination*) that literature is the basic nutrient for its feeding. Frye comments:

What the responsible citizen really uses is his imagination, not believing anybody literally, but voting for the man [sic] or party that corresponds most closely, or least remotely, to his vision of the society he wants to live in. The fundamental job of the imagination in ordinary life, then, is to produce, out of the society we have to live in, a vision of the society we want to live in (Frye, 1963, p. 140).

One could probably substitute a phrase such as "critical mind" for both instances of the word imagination in the above quote. I would suggest that an even more

illuminating substitution would be "education" for imagination. In using her imagination, Frye's responsible citizen clearly does not literally use a portion of her mind but draws upon a myriad of traits, habits, dispositions, skills, knowledges, and practices. Educating the imagination, in this case, is essentially the same thing as educating the person. Conceptions of imagination usually slide into conceptions of mind in general for there is no instance in which we can remove the typical characteristics of the imagination and still have human intelligence (the ability to speculate, to question, to believe, etc.).¹

This way of understanding the imagination, as a rough category label pertaining to ideas, motivations, visions, wants, feelings, and desires has the advantage of letting us keep the transformative, visionary spirit of the Romantics while bringing the imagination out of the mind. Getting beyond an understanding of the imagination as some "part" of the mind is the first step. The second step involves severing an unfortunate link between the imagination and its "productions."

The problem for educational practice is not so much in the Romantic conception of imagination itself, but rather the link between the imagination and its associated term of value: imaginative. Our educational efforts are crippled by a causal link between the supposed faculty of the imagination and imaginative work and activity. Thinkers spanning two centuries, from Coleridge and Shelley to Egan, Greene, and neo-cognitive psychologists of education see imaginative creations as the *product* of an active imagination. What needs to be rejected is

¹ Here we would be in agreement with recent phenomenological accounts of the imagination (see, for example, Casey, 1976; Murray, 1987, p. 176).

the conceptualization of the imagination as a faculty with a discrete physical or quasi-physical existence. What needs to be held onto is the value that thinkers such as Coleridge, Shelley, Egan, and Greene, not to mention Parker, Pestalozzi, or any of the other Romantics mentioned in this investigation attached to imaginative thought, words, and actions.

Typically, when asked to "use our imagination", we are expected to deal with possibility and the sense of possibility is certainly in keeping with the value Romantic thinkers and Romantic education reformers wish to attach to the imagination. Philosopher Alan R. White writes, "To imagine something is to *think* of it as possibly being so" (White, 1990, p. 184). To imagine is to think, feel, or act in the context of certain expectations -- in particular, the expectation that we shall not confine ourselves to actuality. This conception relies upon an understanding of what a person is aiming at, or intending to do or accomplish when he or she is asked to "imagine" and not what capacity, power, or faculty that person employs. This is as far as I believe any definition or conception of the imagination can and ought to go. Indeed, it is not a conception of the imagination at all but rather an understanding of what we do when asked to "use our imagination." To imagine is like "to think" or "to believe." We do not use any particular part of our mind to think or believe. Neither do we use a particular part of our mind to imagine.¹

What is the relationship between our efforts to imagine in certain contexts and the imaginative? Very little. As I argued in the previous chapter, aspects of

¹ Although I have only a crude and limited understanding of recent research in neuro-physiology I believe this claim also applies if framed in the terms of brain activity.

educational discourse still assume that the use or exercise of the imagination guarantees that something desirable (educationally speaking) is happening. Recall Shelley's claim that poetry strengthens the imagination in the "same manner as exercise strengthens a limb." The belief that anything, whether it is exposure to poetry, or playing with Lego, exercises the imagination and, in consequence, makes someone generally more imaginative is fundamentally misleading. "Imaginative" is a concept of value. As such, it is used to praise or evaluate someone or something not to identify that a particular process has taken place. If this were not the case it would be absolutely senseless to refer to a painting, poem, or architectural plan as imaginative since we often have no access to what a person or group of persons did (e.g., whether or not they formed images in their mind) when creating the work.

Simply recognizing and affirming that the imaginative is a descriptor of value, and not one of internal mental process does not help us very much, as educators. We need to know what to aim at -- what to help students aim at -- in imaginative work. We need some understanding about what *counts* as imaginative, and some recommendations about what *should* count. It is to these recommendations that I shall turn in the following chapter.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter I promised that the ground we could reach through some analytic treatment of the concept of the imagination would justify

such an approach. Where, then, does the preceding kind of analytic clarity get us? In the first place, it points toward some serious problems internal to many arguments about the education of the imagination. Second, it also helps accomplish the move I have made from the imagination to the imaginative -- on the surface, a rather trivial move, but one which I tried to demonstrate here (and will try to further elaborate in the following chapter) as crucial.

We can now concisely summarize the internal problems. Education arguments about the imagination in this century continue to be hamstrung by the messy relationship between the "imagination" (in its full Romantic glory) and the value of the imaginative. The route to the imaginative has been problematically paved through the concept of the imagination.

There is a tendency to sing praise to imagination or "Reason in her most exalted mode" with Romantic devotion -- to assume that the stimulation and development of the imagination is unconditionally a desirable thing. Mary Warnock, for example, writes, "Being more imaginative, is, I believe, like being more healthy" (Warnock, 1977, p. 153). It is a position shared and even invoked by other educators and educational theorists, especially in the area of early childhood education (Isenberg and Jalongo, 1993). Yet, obviously, we want students to be imaginative in certain areas and not others. Education philosopher Karen Hanson, criticizing Mary Warnock's celebration of the imagination, writes:

It is not at all obvious that 'being more imaginative is . . . like being more healthy'; indeed, if the analogy is as appropriate as Warnock believes it to be, then the idea of an 'excessive imagination' should strike us as impossible and the phrase 'a morbid imagination' should seem to us oxymoronic. But the fact is that these notions are not self-contradictory, and this fact should alert us to the possibility that being more imaginative is not in itself always and necessarily good or desirable. (Hanson, 1988, p. 129)

The argument between Warnock and Hanson is illustrative of the problem. In one very important sense, Warnock is right to draw a parallel between “imaginative” and “healthy”: both are terms with positive value connotations. Hanson is also importantly right, however, to point out the fact that we do use phrases such as “morbid imagination.” The conflict here, I believe, stems directly from the overlap between a word of value (imaginative) and a word which has been thought to stand for some generalizable part of, or capacity within, the mind. Notice that Hanson attacks Warnock’s generalization on linguistic grounds of the “imagination” and not the imaginative.

Equally, there is a danger in assuming that educators *want* to stimulate students' imaginations. Egan, in the first line of the Introduction to his *book Imagination in Teaching and Learning*, writes, "It seems generally agreed that imagination is a good thing and that it ought to be stimulated and developed in education" (Egan, 1992, p. 1). I do not think we can accept Egan's

unsubstantiated generalization as readily as he would have us do. It is just as plausible to believe that many feel, as did Thomas Aquinas and Decartes, that imagination is an enemy to reason and good common sense. Imagination, if associated with daydreaming, rebelliousness, and other vices, may be seen as a serious obstacle to a good education.

It may be, in general, more desirable to be imaginative than unimaginative; this fact, however does not give us good reason to unconditionally develop the imagination in education (assuming it could be done). An imaginative student is only a good student in so far as his or her imagination is displayed in the appropriate ways. Simply asking a student to use his or her imagination does not guarantee that what the student comes up with will be imaginative, or even acceptable. Rather, it is the nature and quality of the results that makes the act more or less imaginative.

For example, we may think that we develop students' imaginations when we ask them to work on a castle-building project, paint with watercolors, or write poems (tasks that certainly correspond with a Romantic understanding of imagination). A student asked to do any of these things, however, may or may not produce something that we would call imaginative and probably should not always be expected to do so.

The relationship between the concepts of imagination and imaginative also, I think, leads educators to make the unfortunate assumption that "being imaginative" is something that people carry around with them like a good haircut. To have displayed imagination is often assumed to make one, in general, an

imaginative person. This assumption loses sight of the fact that to be an imaginative scientist, for example, depends on how well one does science. One's talent or skill in science does not necessarily transfer to mechanics or to tennis and one's status as an imaginative scientist does not guarantee equal status as an imaginative mechanic or tennis player. Although we often describe someone as an imaginative person, we do so with contexts in mind.

The word often slips into the role of the equally ambiguous and problematic educational term "gifted." As is the case with "gifted" people, "imaginative" people are sometimes thought to carry around their ability like a third eye. As is also the case with terms like gifted, however, to use imaginative in this way is to make the concept essentially meaningless. In what is a gifted person gifted? In darts? In carpentry?

Egan writes, for example, "To be imaginative, then, is not to have a particular function highly developed, but it is to have heightened capacity in all mental functions" (Egan, 1992, p. 65). Besides the difficulty in understanding what is involved in heightened mental "capacity" we have another problem here: to be imaginative has nothing to do with any functions whatsoever. To be imaginative is to have what one does or says evaluated in a particular, positive way.¹

¹ The word imaginative, when applied to a person, refers to what someone has done or demonstrated. We can compare it to a description of a well-hit baseball as a "good hit." In both cases, the words refer to the result of some action, or set of actions, even if (in the case of "imaginative") those actions are not specifically mentioned. We cannot, for instance, practice "good hits" although we can practice good swings. Likewise, we cannot practice being imaginative although we can practice doing math, writing poetry, painting with watercolors, etc.

The central problem that ties together all the instabilities between the imagination and the imaginative is a causal link between the use of the two words. If we can, as I have argued we should, more or less give up the *imagination* as a meaningful educational concept we can free ourselves from the linguistic trap that is our Romantic inheritance but also free ourselves to reaffirm what is at stake in imaginative thought and action.

Chapter Six: The Value of the Imaginative

There is at least one obvious reason why the normative term “imaginative” makes more sense, educationally-speaking, than the imagination. We can talk about, praise, critique, evaluate and debate imaginative work -- a painting, for example -- without knowing anything about the painter, or the process that went into the creation of the painting. Of course, if we find out that a particular painting is an imitation of another original, such knowledge would probably lead us to call it unimaginative. To focus on the use of the imagination in schooling, is to essentially require a kind of knowledge about students that is almost certainly impossible and miseducative. Imagine, if you will, a student arguing for a higher mark on the basis that he “used his imagination”.

Even if we chose to abolish formal systems of marking and evaluation, it would still be problematic to base our evaluation of our own education efforts on getting students to use their imaginations. How do we know they did, or didn't? The most basic benefit of shifting our attention to imaginative work is that it calls attention to standards, goals, aims, and criteria. We want our students to think *critically*, for example, not just to think (although sometimes that is all we can hope for). I do not, however, want to seem a wholly willing part of the recent calls for “standards” in education where standards is a placeholder for measurable educational results. I do not in any sense imply test scores by my use of standards. Rather, I mean a refined and developed sense of the *good*, of

the valuable, in educational efforts and student work. In this chapter I shall try to develop an understanding of what is of educational significance in imaginative work.

DEFINING THE IMAGINATIVE

I want to be very cautious about presenting a definitive picture of the imaginative because of the nature of the concept. As a concept of value and usually one of praise, "imaginative" is much more slippery than the philosopher's touchstones of "chair" or "cat on the mat." At one time, in the history of philosophy, it was quite proper to discuss the essence of value-laden terms such as the good or beautiful. A number of modern philosophers have told us that such pursuits are not particularly interesting anymore and I think we have good reason to believe them.¹ Concepts of value will always be a matter of discussion and debate by virtue of the fact that their meaning derives from values which change over time.

Rather than look to uncover the essence of the imaginative (which would effectively be to slip off the post-Romantic horse just when we have saddled up) I shall argue that we, as educators, should look toward two things. First, we should look at the standards for imaginative activity and determine to what kinds of activity those standards are usually applied -- both to see where the imaginative lies, so to speak, but also to see where we might push the

¹ Among the philosophers I have in mind are Ludwig Wittgenstein, Richard Rorty, Hilary Putnam, but also "earlier" pragmatist philosophers such as William James and John Dewey.

boundaries of imaginative activity and work. Second, we should look at what kinds of contexts, preparation, and experiences help students strive toward those standards.

The influence of the Romantic legacy in talk about the imagination or the imaginative colors the imaginative in certain ways. It skews the realms of the imaginative toward the fantastical. "Imaginative" literature is usually fiction, often science-fiction or fantasy. We are more likely to hear a story about dragons or monsters described as imaginative than one about the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. In fact, it may even be taken as an insult by some to have works of non-fiction described as imaginative. The same, I think, applies to artistic representation. Asked to use imagination, students (based on previous experience with the concept) will tend to draw fantastical pictures. Realistic portraits, however, may not be so easily called imaginative.

These distinctions, however, are not hard and fast and are more a result of the expectations under which we work when asked, particularly in artistic contexts, to use our imaginations. There does not seem to me to be any good reason to restrict the praise of "imaginative" to that-which-is-most-unreal. The standards of imaginative work can make equal sense when applied to photo-realistic portraits as to non-representational expressionism in art.

When it comes to standards, imaginative is a very peculiar concept of value. I think we tend to say something or someone is imaginative or has shown imagination when standards are exceeded in hard-to-qualify ways. That is to say, the word "imaginative" applies to standard-breaking or convention-breaking

work. This does not always mean that the imaginative is the pinnacle of achievement. An imaginative poem may break from poetic convention but not be described as a great poem by critics, other poets, or even the author herself. As a jazz listener I know, for example, that John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* is not necessarily seen as a great work of jazz composition by all music critics. I would be surprised, however, to hear a critic call it unimaginative.

What I wish to offer as a general understanding of the imaginative is this notion of convention-breaking achievement in a practice or context. To help develop this understanding I shall turn to two philosophical sources -- one on the concept of a practice and one on the concept of style.

Philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre, in his highly-acclaimed and much debated book, *After Virtue*, told his own story about the disintegration and fragmentation of moral systems in the "modern" world. Part of MacIntyre's path out of the moral morass reaches back to Aristotle, and Aristotle's account of virtue. MacIntyre, drawing on Aristotle, proposes that virtue be thought of as a fully-learnable excellence which allows one to realize the good of a particular activity - a practice (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 191). MacIntyre argues that realizing the "goods" internal to a practice such as chess depends upon the practitioner seeing the value of playing chess not for external reward (MacIntyre provides the example of paying a young child in candy to play chess) but for the enjoyment of strategy, competition, concentration, etc.

We need not accept MacIntyre's communitarian ethics -- the extension of his understanding of virtue in the moral realm -- to make use of his neo-

Aristotelian account of practices. His understanding of "practice" (I also think "craft" is a good word), however, is very useful for investigating educational endeavors. By practice, MacIntyre means:

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. Tic-tac-toe is not an example of a practice in this sense, nor is throwing a football with skill; but the game of football is, and so is chess (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 187).

MacIntyre also includes the academic disciplines in the notion of a practice as well as artistic and technical "fields" of expression and inquiry.

The relationship of the practitioner to the practice is very important. For MacIntyre, to be able to learn within the practice and to realize the goods internal to the practice, one must submit oneself to its standards of excellence (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 190). A practitioner enters a history when entering a practice -- "to enter into a practice is to enter into a relationship not only with its

contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have extended the reach of the practice to its present point" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 194).

There are a number of good examples of the importance of history in practices. Baseball is full of illustrative potential. MacIntyre writes: "If, on starting to play baseball, I do not accept that others know better than I when to throw a fast ball and when not, I will never learn to appreciate good pitching let alone to pitch" (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 190.) Good baseball players are *learning* baseball players. It is very difficult to learn baseball, or anything, without accepting, to some degree, the authority of others within that practice and the standards of excellence generated by its history.

"To some degree" is an important caveat and one that I believe MacIntyre does not emphasize enough.¹ When we enter into a practice we should accept that our judgment concerning its standards is in need of cultivation and improvement. We should also, however, be encouraged to see that there has always been and will always be room for experimentation and innovation within the practice -- innovation which, to use MacIntyre's words, "extends" the standards within the practice itself. We should, that is to say, be encouraged to be imaginative.

The imaginative is that which extends practices, contexts for human action which have histories of excellence and achievement. "Extends" should not be taken as the same as progress, however. Whether or not the atonal musical arrangements of the 20th century are an improvement upon earlier

¹ He emphasizes the conservation of practices, of course, because of the importance he places in preserving moral coherence.

music in the Western world is still a matter of debate within the practice of music. It is possible that the extension of a practice may be seen by most within the practice (and those on the outside as well) as an important or even needed innovation but it is equally possible that the practice will be divided about the innovation -- as is the case with atonal music or the designated hitter in baseball, for example. Some may even see an "innovation" as a regression.

I do not think it is very helpful to think of practices as aiming at some perfected mode or product, even if some of those within practices do aim at such things (a perfect account of reality, for example, in physics). Rather, I would construe a practice or craft as a social phenomenon perhaps best described as a greenhouse or garden for human action. Like the controlled environments of a greenhouse or garden, practices limit and contain while at the same time encourage growth. Practices organize and impose standards upon human activity so that excellence may be realized. Without the containment of a practice, human action in a particular "area" would indeed enjoy more liberty but very likely less sophistication. Practices and crafts contain, restrain, and organize in order to both control and allow for innovation.

Here I would introduce Alfred North Whitehead's conception of style to flesh out the way in which practices validate both the containment and innovation of human action. Whitehead, in his famous work entitled the *Aims of Education*, calls "style" the "ultimate morality of mind" and conceives of it as follows:

It is an aesthetic sense, based on admiration for the direct attainment of a foreseen end, simply and without waste. Style in art, style in literature, style in science, style in logic, style in practical execution have fundamentally the same aesthetic qualities, namely attainment and restraint. The love of a subject in itself and for itself, where it is not the sleepy pleasure of pacing a mental quarter-deck, is the love of style as manifested in that study (Whitehead, 1949, p. 24).

Whitehead's understanding of style is very similar to MacIntyre's notion of being "inside a practice" or seeing the goods internal to a practice. It is an appreciation of the practice in and of itself. It is an appreciation of the standards of economy within the practice.

Style, I believe, is fundamentally related to the imaginative. Within the context of a practice, the imaginative is the twin of style where the dynamic of style is restraint and the dynamic of the imaginative is innovation. The two are, I believe, in a constant state of mediation within a practice. The drive for style, for precision and restraint, serves to ensure that the drive for the imaginative, the innovative, does not break apart the integrity of the practice. These two values, that of style and that of the imaginative, make it possible for a practice to simultaneously encourage both control and freedom. That which has style but no "imagination" is empty. That which is imaginative but without style is undisciplined.

The concept or label "imaginative" is a common normative term. I am also suggesting that there is an important social "function" of our use of that term. The "ecology" of practices, of complex and rewarding activities such as mathematics, medicine, or baseball, shows forces both of containment and release. The breathing, if you will, of a practice is both inward and outward. I have proposed that the inward movement or force of a practice is determined by the value of style. The outward movement of a practice is determined by the value of the imaginative.

In a similar vein Sharon Bailin argues for an understanding of "creativity" as "significant achievement" within traditions and not action that defies all tradition in irrational fits of inspiration. She writes: "[C]reativity has to do with significant achievement and such achievement takes place against the backdrop of dynamic and evolving traditions of knowledge and inquiry. It involves rule-following as well as rule-breaking and an understanding of when to do each" (Bailin, 1988, p. 131).

From such an understanding of the imaginative as a value internal to practices or crafts we are ready to ask and answer the all-important question for education: what generates the imaginative? The *imaginative* is not a product of internal, mental processes but rather a feature of particular kinds of context-specific competencies. To strive for the imaginative one must have facility, perhaps even expertise, in a practice. One must have style, but a style tempered with a desire and ability to innovate.

Imaginative actions, wherever they are noticed, show a mixing of "natural" capacities and a readiness achieved through familiarity and submersion in many facets of the context -- as well as, in some cases, an inclination on the part of the "actor" to push the boundaries or break the conventions of that context.

Although we can never prepare, per se, students to produce imaginative work we can prepare them for the attempt. The best preparation, it seems to me, involves watchfulness, alertness, and a taking-seriously of the practice in question as well as an understanding of the point of the practice. It would seem important to have mastered a practice, art, science, or physical activity to break its conventions or push its boundaries in a meaningful way. A craftsperson is unlikely to have his or her work evaluated as imaginative, inventive, or creative if it does not react to or against but simultaneously accommodate the tradition of the craft.

Seen this way, it will always be a bit silly to hand pencil and paper to students who have never had any contact with poetic form and convention and ask them to write imaginative *poems*. We continue to do such things, I think, because we still feel the effects of the Romantic imagination -- we still believe that the exercise of the creative imagination alone produces the imaginative. While, in a sense, anything such students would generate would require inventiveness, it would not teach anyone much about the craft or art of poetry. To write imaginative poetry or paint imaginative paintings does not necessarily require formalized training (especially doctrinaire training) but it does seem to require an attentive commitment to doing poetry or doing painting. This

commitment involves competencies and sensitivities to the medium of the craft, be it words, colors, or clay.

I would not, however, want to suggest that young children or those not fully initiated into practices or crafts cannot “be” imaginative or cannot demonstrate imaginative thought and action. The important criteria for the imaginative involves a recognition of how children (or anyone) has both incorporated the forms of a practice or discipline and also experimented with those forms. Thus I am not arguing that we should devalue play or limit the ways in which children explore with materials or ideas. Rather, we should come to a more fully developed notion of what is *important* about imaginative, creative, and playful activity in young children and how standards and stylistic conventions factor into our understanding of imaginative play.

POSSIBLE MINDS, ACTUAL WORDS

Taking the imagination out of the mind, as Ryle and Wittgenstein (among others) have done, puts our whole identification of the goal of “imaginative” education into question. How do we conceive of a pedagogy of the imagination, if the imagination is not part of the mind?

The answer lies in a richer understanding of the philosophical “move” from mind to language that characterizes the thought of Ryle, Wittgenstein, and most “Western” philosophy in the latter part of this century and the ramifications of

that move in our understanding of the imagination and the imaginative. Moral philosopher Sabina Lovibond identifies the imagination as a kind of "linguistic competence" (Lovibond, 1983, p. 200). Similarly, Edward L. Murray in describing a linguistic understanding of the imagination writes, "To imagine is to bring, through the creation of new language, new meaning and new project, a new situation and being into reality" (Murray, p. 211). Indeed, it may be that our ability to "imagine" stems directly from our ability to communicate via language. Without language and its grammatical power to describe present, past, and future we may be *capable* of imagining at all -- and, consequently, be very different kinds of animals than what we take ourselves to be (Lovibond, 1983, p. 76).

Both Lovibond and Murray come from traditions which have abandoned the quest for an imagination internal to the mind in some meaningful empirical way -- Lovibond working out of the analytic tradition of Wittgenstein and Murray from the phenomenological tradition of Sartre. When imagination comes out of the mind, the first place to turn is to words. Within practices, we might say that the imaginative stems from the ability to ask speculative questions in the language of that practice.¹ It comes from the capacity to offer new solutions, new understandings, and new ways of seeing within the practice. We do not, however, want to make a causal mistake similar to that made between the imaginative and the imagination. The imaginative is not the capacity to speculate itself, but rather a feature of high-quality speculative thought and action.

I think we can push this understanding even further. The context of talk of the education of the imagination since the Enlightenment has been the particular conception of mind that is now largely found problematic in philosophy and neuropsychology. It is the idea that the "mind" is an entity with a particular non-physical nature that it is distinct and separate from the brain and nervous system. Education, consequently, has been conceived (as far back as Plato) as a sophistication, improvement, or training of the mind and mental abilities and the imagination as one "improvable" component of mind. If we reject the Enlightenment and Romantic account of the imagination we also reject the more general account of mind, however, and are left with the question: what is educated in education?

The discussion up to this point of the imagination and imaginative points toward an interesting candidate to fill the void left by the departure of mind. Following Lovibond's characterization of the "imagination" as a particular facility with language, I think we ought to reconstruct the "object" of education as the development of particular *vocabularies*.²

This suggestion, of course, needs some unpacking. First, I want to emphasize that I use "vocabulary" in a non-standard way. I do not mean the simple acquisition of definitional knowledge -- the memorization of lists upon lists of words. What is important in education, and especially in the encouragement of the imaginative, is the familiarity with how concepts relate together within the

¹ Brian Sutton-Smith has characterized imagination as the subjunctive mood (Sutton-Smith, 1988).

² I recognize parallels between my use of "vocabularies" and the concepts chosen by a number of prominent educational thinkers -- Dewey's "habits", for example, Egan's "tools of understanding", or Howard

tradition or discipline. As any good biology teacher knows, John or Mary's ability to rattle off the definition of "photosynthesis" means relatively little if they cannot, as we might say, apply or use their understanding of photosynthesis to talk about biological processes within plants. Equally, having the word "integration" in one's mathematical vocabulary (in the crude sense) does not mean much unless one knows *how* to integrate.

It may be suggested that we think *with* concepts in this way. I see little reason to assume that this tool-using metaphor is an accurate characterization of thought process any more than the antiquated notion that we think with strange quasi-material *ideas*. Rather, I would suggest that we think *in* the conceptual structures provided by the relationships between concepts in the discipline or "area" to which we attend.¹ We might be inclined, following Wittgenstein, to characterize our thought as happening within certain "language-games" and governed by our familiarity with the language-game in question.² The notion of vocabulary I am putting forth as the object of education and as a pre-requisite for imaginative work is precisely the notion of familiarity with a language-game.

Yet the terms "vocabulary" and "language-game" can lead us much astray as into fresh theoretical waters. The principal pitfall to be avoided is the reduction of knowledge-within-a-practice to "articulatable" concepts and spoken words. Much of what I have argued is important for imaginative thought and

Gardner's "disciplinary understanding." At present I wish to present my use of the word, however, rather than dwell on extensive comparisons and contrasts.

¹ A claim supported by an increasing number of developmental psychologists -- especially those influenced by the work of Lev Vygotsky (see especially Gardner, 1991).

² I particularly like Richard Rorty's characterization of "intuition" as familiarity with language-games (Rorty, 1979, p. 34).

action is familiarity and sensitivity to practices and disciplines. Attitudes, sensibilities, dispositions, and emotional responses would seem equally important and these are certainly not always as easy to express. I also see no good reason to exclude traditionally "physical" abilities such as the actual hands-on facility at working with clay or playing an instrument in our conception of "vocabularies." Neither do I see a reason to exclude emotions from well-developed vocabularies. I would emphasize, however, that we need concepts to express and discuss our emotional responses. I do not think we want to privilege the feeling of caring, for example, over the ability to talk about why caring is important.

An unfortunate by-product of Enlightenment and Romantic accounts of mind and of the consequent attention given to the imagination, as a "developable" faculty, is a tendency to praise only "mental" products as imaginative. We seem to draw a peculiar, but very traditional line, in our common usage of the word imaginative. This is hardly surprising given the history of the concept of imagination.

No one is immune from this privileging. Philosopher of education Robin Barrow, although working from Ryle's analysis of the imagination, offers the following conception for the imaginative: "To be imaginative is to have the inclination and ability consciously to conceive of the unusual and effective in particular contexts" (Barrow, 1988, p. 84). Barrow's understanding of "imaginative" is confined to the ability to "consciously conceive" in a certain way. Later he specifically states, "[imagination] can only be displayed in activities that

involve thinking. For to have imagination means to conceptualize in a particular kind of way" (Barrow, 1988, p. 86).

Alan R. White, on the other hand, draws the boundaries of the imagination-in-use differently. White observes, "The exercise of one's imagination may take the form of sayings, writings, or doings" (White, 1990, p. 185). It is important to note that White is not arguing that the *faculty* of imagination is literally exercised, but that our language to describe imaginative work fits just as well with language-based products as physical products. White uses the example of a taxi-driver, illustrating that it makes sense to describe a taxi-driver who finds a route through rush-hour traffic as imaginative (White, 1990, p. 186). Although a cabby may indeed be consciously conceptualizing possible paths, we would probably not tend to say that every choice (turn, brake, acceleration) is a conscious and intentional activity in the way Barrow wants to emphasize.

White's divergence with Barrow brings out two related problems that are symptomatic of the Cartesian legacy of mind and body separation. The first problem involves Barrow's criterion of "consciously." The second is his location of imaginative work in thinking alone. We are forced into such distinctions when we attempt to conceptualize or define imaginative activity as the product of certain steps or occurrences or the product of the mysterious imagination-at-work. Words such as "conscious", "intentional", or "instinctive" only make sense as criteria if we explain exactly how we are using them in each case. What

makes something imaginative, as I have argued above, is its quality, not a fixed process or procedure in the mind.

Thus I would suggest that we push our boundaries for the imaginative to include a variety of human activities and accomplishments and use our understanding of vocabularies as both "object" and aim of education to knock down false walls between physical, mental, and emotional ability and knowledge within practices.

THE IMAGINATIVE IN THE CURRICULUM

Although, based on the above understanding of the imaginative, there are clearly innumerable areas of possible encouragement of imaginative work in education, I wish to focus in detail on three broad "places" in which the imaginative is of fundamental importance. I also believe that these three areas capture much of what we hope to accomplish in education.

I. Aesthetic Judgment

The concept of imagination has, of course, deep associations with creative expression. It has been seen to be the generative force behind works of art. If we reject this understanding of the function of the imagination in our

rejection of the imagination as "part of the mind" where are we left in terms of the arts in the curriculum?

While there does not seem to be much reason to say that the various fine arts are a superior occasion for imaginative thought and action than anything else, there is still plenty of room for argument for the arts. In fact, the creative arts still enjoy special consideration in our treatment of the curricular "meaning" of the imaginative. In every discipline or area of educational importance we see the mediation between what I have described as the interests of style and the interests of the imaginative. Nowhere else, however, is the language to *describe* this mediation as well-developed as in the creative arts and nowhere else is the sense that one is working within but sometimes also against a tradition more acknowledged. The language of aesthetic judgment native to the arts is, I think, a language we can largely adopt for other areas as well. It is a vocabulary of craft, "duty to material", and sensitivity to form.

The importance of art and craft in education is that we can hold the "aesthetic" vocabularies of these areas up as an example for the possible vocabularies of all curricular subjects. John Dewey, I think, captures the value of such a blending of educational languages in his *Art as Experience*. He writes, "The use of a particular medium, a special language having its own characteristics, is the source of every art, philosophic, scientific, technological and esthetic" (Dewey, 1987, p. 323).

Aesthetic judgment (in a variety of artistic media) navigates the demands for style as well as the imaginative with a host of concepts such as balance,

form, harmony, technique, inventiveness, and experimentation. The critic, either as onlooker or as artist herself, judges the quality of the creation based on immersion within the particular vocabulary of the medium. She tests the creation against earlier creations and *possible* future creations. This is the importance of the imaginative in aesthetic judgment. It is the longing for the possible -- the forward-looking demand that every artist, whether musician, poet, dancer, or painter, has felt. It is a demand, however, that must be reconciled with the equally important demand for style and artistic tradition. The competent craftsperson learns to make the simple pot before the ornate; the competent musician must learn at least some standards before he experiments. It is, in many ways, a process of recapitulation within the practice that gives the student access to the vocabulary of the discipline.

Although we can still, based on an understanding of the importance of aesthetic concepts and traditions, make a case for the expressive arts as educationally important, I do not think we can rely upon a notion of "food for the imagination" to bolster our arguments in favor of official curricular status for such things as creative writing, drama, painting, music, pottery, or dance. Yet we can argue that these areas of human activity and judgment have worth as places in which students can step into great traditions and practices and learn sensitivity to various media. Most of all, we can and ought to argue that students who immerse themselves in such traditions have the opportunity to learn forms of action that can challenge and also please themselves and others.

One of the dangers in asserting the generalizability of "imaginative engagement" in the creative arts to other areas of life is that the arts become largely instrumental in value; the cognitive value of art education is elevated beyond the creation of wonderful paintings, songs, or plays. Although this kind of justification may indeed keep art in the public school classroom, it does not, I think, do much to foster what most artists and art educators think is valuable about art and craft.

II. Practical Reasoning and "Critical Thinking"

The earliest roots for any discussion of practical reasoning in Western philosophy are found in Aristotle -- in particular, Aristotle's conception of *phronesis* or practical wisdom. Practical wisdom, for Aristotle, was the ability to think and act in regard to the human good (both for oneself and for others) and was essential for happiness, moral virtue, as well as basic judgment. Central to the ability to know the good for oneself and hence for others is the ability to weigh wants and desires against the ramifications of getting what one wants (for Aristotle, the process of deliberation or the process of dealing with things possibly attained through action). In their conception of practical reasoning, Coombs and Wright discuss the standards for competent practical reasoning in a variety of contexts. Of special importance in the fulfillment of those standards the ability "to imagine vividly and accurately what it would be like were the wanted state of affairs to be realized" (Coombs and Wright, 1994, p. 49).

Coombs and Wright's use of "imagine" here is very much in keeping with White's conception of imagine as being the capacity to think of something as "possibly being so" as well as the spirit of Aristotle's *phronesis* (White, 1990, p. 184). We might think of practical reasoning as involving a limiting of possibility -- perhaps even a movement from possibility to actuality as one matches wants with outcomes. As such, what we would call practical reasoning is basic to almost all human activity and worthy of educating, if such education is possible.

Experience is obviously important for the development of practical reasoning and consequently wisdom has been long-associated with age for good reason. We learn through mistakes and successes. If we consider the imaginative component of practical reasoning, however, to require speculative competence we can also see the importance of learned language-games and concepts.

There is a close relationship between practical reasoning and critical thinking. Certainly our intuition tells us that practical reasoning involves critical thinking, or, at least, should if it is to be successful. We can "critically" think, however, outside of contexts of practical import. We can think critically about mathematics, theoretical physics, graphic design, or any other area in which we face problems in need of solution. Recently, there have been a number of treatments of critical thinking (Lippman, 1988; Norris and Ennis, 1989; Paul, 1988). I find the conception of Bailin, Case, Coombs, and Daniels most persuasive in its simplicity and in its ability to bring focus to the aspect of *quality* that is so important to what we hope to achieve in the teaching of critical thinking.

The authors summarize, "A person is attempting to think critically when she intends to reach a reasoned judgment about what it would be sensible or reasonable to believe or do in a given situation" (Bailin, Case, Coombs, Daniels, 1993).

The connection between practical reasoning and critical thinking in this conception is clear and the importance of the imaginative remains just as strong. We must be able to "take upon ourselves" the situation at hand, be it a scientific, political, or moral problem and through inquiry, speculation, and judgment decide upon the best answer or best course of action. The seduction of the concept of the Romantic imagination here might lead us to think that this involves some carnival of images within the mind. The imaginative engagement with the situation, however, is nothing more, no less, than our ability to put questions and give reasons within the language available to us. Our ability to put good questions to a critically-challenging problem of civil engineering depends on our facility with a number of concepts related to civil engineering.

Critical thinking and practical reasoning are also kinds of linguistic practices and as such contain the dual demands of style and the imaginative. In her paper entitled "The Problem with Peter: Understanding and Critical Thinking" Sharon Bailin suggests, working from MacIntyre's concept of practice, that students must be initiated into the practice of critical thought through an understanding of the *value* of the practice (Bailin, 1995). Such an initiation requires that students see the point of reasons and argumentation and, to a certain extent, accept a degree of stylistic limitation in argumentation. Students

must also, however, see that there is a time for the rejection of old reasons in favor of new ones. There may even be a time for rejection of old standards of critical thought and rationality itself, but this rejection comes most fruitfully when the rejection is rich in its own understanding of previous standards.

III. Moral and Political Reasoning

At the heart of the Romantic understanding of the power of the imagination was the human ability to reconstruct and re-envision the world. It informed Blake's spiritualistic individualism, Shelley's revolutionary spirit, and the pedagogical foundation of Pestalozzi and Rousseau. This "ability" is the part of the Romantic imagination most in need of recovery today. Consistent with the way I want to understand the imaginative as stemming from intimacy and familiarity with the vocabularies of certain practices, I want to argue that moral and political reasoning are kinds of competencies with the particular language-games associated with moral and political life.

Familiarity with the vocabularies of moral and political thought is how Sabina Lovibond recommends we understand the moral "imagination". She writes:

Suppose we do undertake to substitute a different way of life for our familiar one. In this situation, the different way of life envisaged by us may be the one which has never actually existed. It may

simply be something which we represent to ourselves in thought -- a product of our (moral or political) 'imagination'. Yet as long as the extant criteria of moral and political rationality are not so rigid that any innovation in the relevant discursive practices is automatically condemned to be perceived as an *error*, the language in which we express the thought of that different way of life can be the one made available to us by the way of life in which we have been brought up to participate (Lovibond, 1983, p. 195).

Our discursive practices are, according to Lovibond, the only means which we have to "imagine" how things might be constructed or valued differently. Our moral and political imagination is our ability, based on the language which we have available to us, to speculate about the "could-be". It is an ability demonstrated in calm spiritual insights as well as in powerful revolutionary rhetoric. It is this ability, so essential to Shelley, to re-invent the world. It is not, however, a re-invention that "happens" inside our mind. It "happens" in utterance within a community of language-users.

We can become better at this ability, of course. We can learn moral and political concepts, and most importantly practice moral and political argumentation. We can experiment with our moral and political vocabularies (or, to permit a slip, our moral and political "imagination"), and I think, this is the key to moral and political education.

Here as well we find the mediation between style and the imaginative. The mediation takes shape, I believe, as a reconciliation of moral and political actuality with possibility; a mediation between what is likely to be possible with utopian ideals. Moral philosopher Jeffrey Stout, in his treatment of the problem of moral language in "post-modern" times, asks:

What sort of configuration of practices and institutions should we strive for? It must, in the first place, be one we can realistically hope to achieve. That sets an upper limit on relevant conceptions of the good society and, for us at any rate, places constraints on the possible role of religious practices. The sought-for configuration of practices and institutions must also, however, be one we can *imagine* [emphasis mine] ourselves wanting to live with (Stout, 1988, p. 290).

This is the task of speculative moral and political thought: to balance between actuality and possibility by finding room in our present language(s) of ethics and politics for our hopes and dreams of better social arrangements. Our moral and political linguistic practices must be able to critique the present, but also envision the future. As Lovibond argues, our language can only do this if sufficiently open to revision and inclusion of the "new" in our present moral and political vocabularies.

We also, I think, need to demand of our moral and political vocabularies coherence with our vocabulary of emotion. A number of educational thinkers have stressed the over-looked importance of emotional sophistication and maturity in our educational endeavors (Noddings, 1984; Martin, 1981). Warnock as well as Egan emphasize the links between “imagination”, emotional engagements, and empathy (Egan, 1992; Warnock, 1976). In our moral thinking it seems crucially important to be able to feel with others. I do not think, however, we need to keep a sense of the imagination as providing the power to “picture” ourselves in the shoes of another. Expressions such as “how would you feel if” or “imagine being treated that way” do not necessarily call upon us to form images at all. They require us to consider things in a new way. It is these expressions (as well as the courage to put them to others) and their place in our moral and emotional vocabularies that do the “work” and not the forming of images.

There are a number of difficult questions that we need to put to this understanding of moral and political “linguistic” sophistication. The implication is not very far from Frye's idea of the sophistication of moral and political “imagination” through exposure to the great stories of Western literature. We need to be cautious and self-examining to avoid equating competent moral and political reasoning with *specific* vocabularies -- such as those of rights, duties, national pride, etc. Rather, imaginative moral and political reasoning depends on the ability of persons to express alternative forms of life in whatever language(s)

is/are common to their own moral and political communities and to test those alternatives against present situations and expectations.

Thus the foremost duty of moral and political education, beyond even the teaching of moral concepts, is the fostering of a disposition or attitude regarding moral and political language -- a disposition that sees the language as flexible, changing, and changeable. The disposition is precisely the same disposition that should be encouraged in any practice if imaginative thought and action is desired. It is a disposition that recognizes the need to learn past moral and political vocabularies and to be sensitive to the "style" of past moral and political argument, but also recognizes the need to push boundaries.

I do not think that we should deceive ourselves, however, into thinking that such an understanding of imaginative moral and political reasoning is harmless and equally acceptable to all students and parents. It is an understanding that erodes fundamentalist and essentially conservative accounts of morality, spirituality, and political life. It is an understanding which is not willing to accept the happiness and "wisdom" of, as Lovibond argues, the "humble, simple people who provide [the conservative moral realist] with his models of virtue" (Lovibond, 1983, p. 200). It is an understanding which asks us, when we undertake moral or political education, to ask our students to learn linguistic practices which undermine confidence in moral, political, and religious certainty of all kinds. It is a understanding that is steeped in the ideology of democracy and to a lesser extent liberalism. We cannot casually think that such an approach to moral and

political education should be acceptable to persons from socio-cultural groups who do not share commitment to democratic praxis.

In the next chapter, I shall turn our attention to the place of the imagination and the imaginative within socio-cultural conflict and argue that we cannot very effectively fence-straddle on this matter. Our stance on what should be valued as imaginative in education necessarily commits us to certain moral and political positions. Rather than hide these commitments behind the language of the generally agreeable concept of the growing "imagination" we should embrace our part in the social struggle over the imaginative.

CONCLUSION

Philosopher of education Sharon Bailin, writing of the status of the concept of "creativity" in current educational discourse, observes that creativity, largely under the hands of psychologists of education within the cognitive tradition, has been equated with certain personality traits and cognitive dispositions (Bailin, 1988). The upshot is, according to Bailin, the:

proliferation of techniques and courses which purport to foster creativity through an emphasis on novelty, the suspension of judgment, the spontaneous generation of ideas, and irrational processes. It has also resulted in attempts to teach creativity as an

isolated psychological process considered independently of specific disciplinary contexts. (Bailin, 1988, pp. 128-129)

The problem with contemporary language of the imaginative is, unsurprisingly, quite similar to that of creativity. Convinced that "imagination" is an empirically meaningful concept, and that it can be generally improved and developed through repeated use and stimulation (the old Thorndikean formula), educators equivocate "use of imagination" with "imaginative" product. The imagination, assumed to be a worthwhile commodity, is exercised with blocks, role-playing, and fictional literature. It is a trap into which all the thinkers in the previous section fall prey, in one way or another. It is also a trap that is most likely inescapable if we are determined to talk about *the* imagination in education.

To make such a distinction between two words -- between a noun form and an adjectival form -- may seem trivial. It is the "thingness" of the noun that is the problem, however. The legacy of the Romantic imagination is the attribution of "thingness", of empirical meaning, to human abilities associated with the production of great poetry, music, arguments, paintings, and moral insight. Continued dependence on the noun for arguments about the curriculum latches on to the associated "goodies" of Romanticism: individuality, freedom, independent thought, moral empathy, etc.

The insights of educational theorists such as Egan, Greene, and Frye concerning the imagination are valuable contributions to the history of educational ideas. I believe, however, that their use of the concept of the

imagination and their conceptual “slippage” into Romantic language about its use and development misleads educators and potentially weakens their curricular arguments. The easiest way to expose the weakness is to take on the hat of the education policy bureaucrat -- the “enemy” that these three theorists share in common with many who celebrate the imagination. As educational tester we might, thumping stacks of measurement data like a sacred text, demand: “prove it”.

The use of the imagination grants such a policy maker home turf. If we postulate an empirically-meaningful entity such as the imagination, we admit we are talking about something we should, at least in theory, be able to improve (which necessitates being able to show that the “something” in question has indeed improved). My suggestion, then, is to shift ground to recover home turf. The measurement informed policy-maker cannot bring the host of tests to bear on questions of value and worth. If we stop talking about how to educate the imagination and substitute for it discussion about what kinds of imaginative work we wish to encourage in students we at least equalize the playing field.

While this move gets us out of one morass it drops us in another. It effectively disarms arguments about the place of literature and art in the curriculum that have, since the early progressive thinkers, been supported by the Romantic imagination. While we gain ground against a common enemy, do we not lose some of our own constituents? The simple answer is yes. Purging our educational vocabulary of the imagination is bound to seem, to many educators, like the worst kind of intellectual violence. Anyone thoroughly caught in the

Romantic conception of the imagination will have a hard time giving up the concept that has elevated the poetic, the aesthetic, and creative individuality to historically unheard-of heights.

Yet the shift to the imaginative lets us at least keep the values we attach to these things, and lets us recover (should we so desire) Shelley's revolutionary tone and Blake's visionary spirit. What excited all the Romantics was the notion that the human mind could re-invent the world. What should continue to excite us as well as students is the capacity to do exactly this, through our various languages and expressive practices. The Romantics needed the imagination to reconcile mind and world and provide hope that the fundamental divisions between self and other and physical and mental might be overcome. We no longer need these divisions. We have, as Wittgenstein has told us, only language. Our mind is language and our world is language. If anything is to be imaginatively transformed it will happen within our language.

Conclusion: Pedagogy of the Imagination and Ideological Conflict

We may not wish to so easily grant the assumption (as Kieran Egan does) that everyone is agreed that imagination is a good thing and ought to be a focus of educational effort and a subject of curricular concern. While this view may be common among many within the discourses of educational practice and theory, it is very likely not so common among the public. The Romantic legacy in the conception of the imagination associates imagination with a number of other concepts that are often at the center of conflict about child-raising and schooling: freedom, individuality, experimentation, questioning, fantasy, etc. Brian Sutton-Smith observes:

[A]s an antithesis to modern technology and homogenization, we have come so strongly to think of the imagination as the font of our freedom, and even of anarchic freedom, that in general we also think of it as a fairly irresponsible force. Being of the kind that made Picasso famous, it is not surprising that the general public views it with some alarm. Perhaps our belief in imagination as a rather feeble and fanciful kind for children is itself a reflex to our fear of its more blatant and anarchic manifestations in the world of arts. Certainly no one would accuse the schools of the Western world of giving much freedom to the imagination except in the

sheltered world of preschoolers or in the fanciful forms of children's literature of school "challenge" programs. (Sutton-Smith, 1992, p. 17)

Sutton-Smith perceptively notices a basic reluctance in talk about the imagination. It is a reluctance that especially characterizes the stronghold of education psychology in its focus on the importance of imaginative "play" in early childhood education. Educators are fairly comfortable praising, encouraging, and accepting the display of "imagination" in younger children. I also think they have, to a significant extent, convinced a good portion of the public that they are right. We see much less talk, however, of the importance of imagination in adolescents and young adults -- in the high school. Public opinion is certainly wide-ranging but we might generalize to say that career and/or college preparation is front in the minds of many parents more than imaginative "play" of any form in later grades. It is risky, very risky, to begin talking about the importance of imagination in older children. Older students may "imagine" drugs, sex, and a host of other "unimagineables".

Even in early grades, particular conceptions of the imagination pose a threat to various cultural traditions, and this threat is made even greater when "imagination" is encouraged in teenagers. Writing in 1920 of the proper education for the imagination Edwin Kirkpatrick gives the sage advice:

Evil results may also follow the half-playful exploration by the imagination of the possible human emotions, when any one kind of mental picturing is given too much prominence and reality by association with some fundamental mental instinct . . . In adolescence the sex instinct is a serious source of danger to the imaginative child if his imagination gets started along wrong lines (Kirkpatrick, 1920, p. 136).

When we inherit the Romantic representation of the creative imagination we inherit (regardless of our ethics and politics) something like a wild bronco. For some, the imagination is a thing of absolute beauty in its freeing power. For others, it is only made useful if "broken" and reined in. We might read Kirkpatrick's "along wrong lines" as perversion, homosexuality, or sexual promiscuity. Kirkpatrick was aware enough of the ability of human beings to "picture" the unreal -- the ability he called the imagination. This ability, however, could be used to call to mind and experiment with the deviant as well as with geometry and geography. On one level the imagination poses a threat to moral and ethical boundaries drawn by previous generations. It also poses a threat to political and economic boundaries.

The concept of imagination is, I believe, a key piece in the larger struggle over cultural supremacy in the schools. I wish to suggest, in fact, that it lies at the center of perhaps the greatest cultural tug-of-war in our public schools. The war is over the proper social function of the school -- the role school plays in

preparing children for adulthood *in* society. Naturally, the principal issue at stake is "whose society?"

In the last decade arguments about the cultural and socio-political role or "duties" of the public school have seemed to reach a sustained fever-pitch. Curriculum theorist Michael Apple, in the second-edition preface to his influential book *Ideology and Curriculum*, observes: "Educators have witnessed a massive attempt -- one that has been more than a little successful -- at exporting the crisis in the economy and in authority relations *from* the practices and policies of dominant groups *onto* the schools" (1990, p. vii). Once in the schools, the struggle over socio-political power manifests as a struggle over children's minds. Often, the camps that develop fall squarely within the political right and left with the right arguing for a neo-traditionalism in the curriculum and the left maintaining neo-progressivist aims and goals.

I think, however, that we can be misled by looking first to political polarization. The struggle over imagination in schools runs much further back -- back, in fact, to the Romantic roots. Attached to the concept of the imagination are the ideals of the Romantics: freedom, individuality, self-discovery, and social transformation. If we believe that education ought to release the individuality of each student we are likely to be in favor of education which "stimulates" the imagination and gives it room for free play. The connotative relation of imagination and expressive individuality makes questions such as "why should we stimulate the imagination" seem unnecessary. If we believe, however, that education ought to give all children a "stock" of cultural "Great Learning" we are

more likely to see the education of the imagination as involving a kind of sophistication of that faculty or power -- a directing of imagination.

Quite on the other end of the spectrum -- perhaps the notion of a bipolar spectrum is even inadequate here -- is a basic hostility, informed by cultural or religious fundamentalism, to the idea of public education. It would be arrogant, however, and wrong to say that fundamentalism (of any type) suffers from a general lack of imagination. The struggle between traditionalism and progressivism (or even fundamentalism and liberalism in education discourse) is not, as one would probably be led to believe, over whether or not the "imagination" is important. Here is where the concept of *the* imagination misleads. Although fundamentalist Christians, for example, are likely to want their children shielded from evolutionary theory in biology, many progressivist parents may be hostile toward the inclusion of Huckleberry Finn in the curriculum on account of its racist language. Few parents want their children exposed in school to that which they find offensive or that which they deem to be simply incorrect.

Rather, the issue is in what areas parents believe it important for children to use "their imaginations." Religious fundamentalists have just as much stake in ensuring that their children vividly "imagine" consequences of actions as other parents do in ensuring that their children question religious dogmatism.

I am not saying that there is no relevant distinction to be made between dogmatism and skepticism, however. I do think we (with "we" standing for the democratic citizenry) want children to receive an education which helps them

resist dogmatism of all kinds. I think we would rather have children growing into adults who could question just as readily as be imaginatively engaged by powerfully-presented forms of knowledge. The ability and disposition to speculate is dangerous to moral, religious, political, or intellectual dogmatism of all types.

For those who would agree with me that what is worth saving in the Romantic conception of the imagination is its connection to the values of freedom, self-expression, and social transformation the real "enemy" (if such a word is sensible here) is not fundamentalism and pedagogical traditionalism. We shall always have those fights to fight. The danger is from those who do not care very much about "imagination" and boundary-pushing work at all unless it is economically advantageous -- those who see it neither as socially destructive or socially transformative but as a potential resource to exploit. It is far more difficult to "locate" this position on the imagination. Indeed, this position is, I think, more reflective of the reified *interests* of the technologically sophisticated capitalist state. Yet it is not capitalism, as an economic system, that is the primary problem, but the subordination of persons to efficiency, of discussion to bureaucracy, and of fairness to profit that has become co-extensive with multinational corporate capitalism.¹ It is what social theorist Jurgen Habermas has described as the "technicizing of the lifeworld" -- the replacement of community-based processes of discussion and debate with the processes of money, power,

¹ A number of critical education theorists have explored the phenomena of reification and formal rationality, with their ties to industrial instrumentalism, in modern schooling practices. See especially Aronowitz and Giroux (1993), and Shannon (1989).

and mass media as forms of rationality and public decision-making (Habermas, 1984, p. 281).

The reliance, however, on a conception of the imagination as an improveable mental entity extends an open invitation to the measurement-driven, input-output interests of industrial capitalism. Contemporary language of the imagination effectively allows it to be co-opted into the scheme of pre-test, post-test, and educational "outcome." If we have an isolatable part of the mind or brain which is the imagination, and if it is capable of conditioning through various stimuli, we do not have much reason to object to measurement psychology taking over its study and development. If, on the other hand, we categorize "imagination" as simply a placeholder or metaphor we run the risk, as I have argued, of being educationally vacuous.

If, however, what is taken to be our "imagination" is not a power-in-the-mind but general facilities with forms of expression and language -- what I have presented as developed "vocabularies" -- we have ammunition to argue that the only way to evaluate the "imagination" is in open discussion, critique, and argumentation about the values we hold. Although this does not remove the possibility that certain groups will claim stakes over the domain of the imagination or the imaginative, it changes the debate from argument over something in the head (ostensibly a testable "something", hidden to all but specialized researchers) to argument over norms and language.

This brings us to our final destination. One "vocabulary" that must be sophisticated in public education is the language of public, democratic,

argumentation. It is a language of rights, responsibilities, choices, and respect for others. It involves the practice of careful consideration and weighing of alternatives. It is also the place where I believe we must encourage imaginative thought and action and it is a language over which no one can claim final expertise.¹

Furthermore, the language must be developed and put to use in community life. One disadvantage of the Romantic imagination, especially for education, is the celebration of the solitary, creative mind. The image of the poet, blessed but perhaps also cursed with an over-active imagination, is the metaphor for the Romantic mind in its full splendor. This image is problematic for a number of reasons. Besides its connections with a fully male-gendered, individual genius, this understanding of the imaginative mind leads toward talk of the "gifted and talented" and policies designed to maximize the success of the best and brightest and away from education designed to give all students speculative linguistic competency. Language, however, is a thoroughly social phenomenon and linguistic competencies can only be "exercised", developed, expanded, and evaluated in communities of language-users. Such an understanding of the linguistic competency required for participation in democratic public life corresponds to John Dewey's conception of democracy as "more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 1944, p. 87).

¹ We might say, that in an utopian democracy, every adult would have "expertise" in the language of public argument and decision-making and be capable of getting children inside the language.

The kind of language necessary for healthy democratic practice is a language which I believe is generally lacking in many contemporary schools. Critical education theorists Stanely Aronowitz and Henry Giroux perceptively characterize the problem as a lack in critical public philosophy (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1993). Means-ends thinking eclipses debate about what kind of societal arrangements would improve upon present conditions. In the realm of democratic practice, we need to provide students with the opportunities to imaginatively debate social alternatives and *teach* them the practice of critical, public, dialogue.

We need to give up the idea that we can innocently call for more “imagination” in the classroom. We can either purposively, consciously, and strategically participate in cultural struggle over the domain(s) of children’s imaginative exploration and work or we can deceive ourselves into thinking we can be culturally and politically neutral. If we point or even push our students to speculate about politics, ethics, religion, as well as math and physics we shall be doing cultural violence to certain traditions. If we, for example, ask our students to consider questions such as marriage rights for gays and lesbians, the feasibility of economic growth with environmental protection, or other contentious social questions we will be in conflict with many parents. I think we should push our students to ask such questions. We, as educators, need to accept the burden that we cannot help but direct students. We must choose in what directions we wish to point, and push, them.

This is not to say that education, at any level, must be *directive*. Making educational choices does not mean that the atmosphere within the bounds of those choices must be restrictive and closed. I have argued that imaginative work should be framed within practices where conservation and exploration are equally valued. As educators committed to developing students' capability to imaginatively express themselves in democratic discourse, I believe we must make our classrooms places of reflective, thoughtful, directed experimentation. We, as educators, must be willing and able to stand as experts within our practices but also as co-experimenters. We must work to develop our own language of public debate and dialogue and must model respect for others and critical thought.

William Heard Kilpatrick, student of John Dewey, wrote the following words in 1926. They ring true, I think, today and encapsulate the importance of getting students *imaginatively* inside the practice of democratic discourse:

Our duty is so to prepare the rising generation to think that they can and will think for themselves, even ultimately, if they so decide, to the point of revising or rejecting what we now think. Our chosen beliefs will have to stand this ordeal. If they are worthy to survive, the probabilities are that they will stand this test. If they cannot stand this test, the probabilities are that they ought not to survive. As soon then as we take the lid off the universe our claim to fasten our conclusions on our children vanishes. We must free our

children to think for themselves. Anything else is not only to refuse to accept the facts as to the unknown changing future, but is at the same time to deny democracy and its foundational demand that we respect other people, even our own children. (Kilpatrick, 1927, p. 60)

In Kilpatrick's sentiments we can find the Romantic imagination of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and Blake -- an imagination that pushed at the boundaries of moral, religious, aesthetic, and political thought. At the same time we see it as fundamentally part of the educational process. Such an education in freedom requires that students know traditions as much as be willing to question them. Just as the Romantics intimately knew the traditions against which they were reacting, new generations must intimately know the beliefs, knowledge, and values of past generations before they can put them to the test. The Romantic imagination, transformed into an education in imaginative thought and action provides a beacon for educators in the struggle for social progress and democratic empowerment.

Bibliography

- Abrams, M.H. (1981). *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition*. London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Aronowitz, S. and Giroux, H. (1993). *Education still under siege* (2nd ed.). Westport, CN: Bergin & Garvey.
- Bailin, S. (1988). *Achieving extraordinary ends: An essay on creativity*. Boston: Kluwer.
- . (1995). The problem with Peter. Unpublished essay presented at the American Philosophical Association.
- Barrow, R. (1988). Some observations on the concept of the imagination. In K. Egan & D. Nadaner (Eds.), *Imagination and education*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- Bellah, R. et al. (1985). *Habits of the heart: Individualism and commitment in American life*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press.
- Berk, L. (1994) Vygotsky's theory: The importance of make-believe play. *Young children*, 50:2, 30-39.
- Bertoff, A. (1984). *Reclaiming the imagination: Philosophical perspectives for writers and teachers of writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Bontyon/Cook.
- . (1990). Coleridge, I.A. Richards, and the imagination. In J. Willinsky (Ed.), *The educational legacy of romanticism*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Bloom, H. (1971). *The ringers in the tower: Studies in romantic tradition*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- Bogdan, D. (1992). *Re-educating the imagination: toward a poetics, politics, and pedagogy of literary engagement*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook; Toronto, Canada: Irwin.
- Bowen, H. (1899). *Froebel and education through self-activity*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

- Bowra, C.M. (1950). *The romantic imagination*. Oxford, London, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bruner, J. (1968). *Toward a theory of instruction*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- . (1986). *Actual minds, possible worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Cameron, N. K. (1942). The social philosophy of Shelley. *The sewanee review*, L: 4.
- Casey, E. (1976). *Imagining: A phenomenological study*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Cherryholmes, C. (1988). *Power and criticism: Poststructural investigations in education*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- Coleridge, S. T. (1987). *Coleridge: Poems and prose*. (Kathleen Raine, Ed.). Middlesex, England & New York: Penguin.
- Connell, J. (1996). Assessing the influence of Dewey's epistemology on Rosenblatt's reader response theory. *Educational theory*, 46:4, 395-413.
- Coombs, J. & Daniels, L. (1991). Philosophical inquiry: conceptual analysis. In E. Short (Ed.), *Forms of curriculum inquiry*. New York: SUNY Press.
- Coombs, J. and Wright, I. (1994). A conception of practical reasoning. *Inquiry: Critical thinking across the disciplines*, 14:4, 48-51.
- Cremin, L. (1969). *The transformation of the school: Progressivism in American education 1876-1957*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Curtis, S.J., and Boulton, M.E.A. (1964). *A short history of educational ideas*. London: University Tutorial Press Ltd.
- De Man, P. (1983). *Blindness and insight: Essays in the rhetoric of contemporary criticism* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Dewey, J. (1897). My pedagogic creed. *School journal*, 54:January 16.
- . (1944). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: The Free Press.
- . (1960). *The child and the curriculum and the school and society*. Chicago, IL: Phoenix Books, U. of Chicago Press.

- . (1987). *The later works, 1925-1953*. Jo Ann Boydston (Ed.). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Donaldson, M. (1978). *Children's minds*. Glasgow, Scotland: William Collins Sons.
- Downs, R. (1975). *Heinrich Pestalozzi: Father of modern pedagogy*. Boston: Twayne.
- Eagleton, T. (1983). *Literary theory: An introduction*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- . (1990). *The ideology of the aesthetic*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Egan, K. & Nadaner, D. (Eds.). (1988). *Imagination and education*. New York: Teachers College Press; Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Egan, K. (1990). *Romantic understanding: The development of rationality and imagination, ages 8-15*. New York & London: Routledge.
- . (1992). *Imagination in teaching and learning: the middle school years*. London, Ontario: The Althouse Press.
- . (1997). *The educated mind: How cognitive tools shape our understanding*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.
- Eichner, H. (Ed.). (1972). *'Romantic' and its cognates: The European history of a word*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Engell, J. (1982). *The creative imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Froebel, F. (1887). *The education of man*. (W.N. Hailman trans.). New York: D. Appleton and Company.
- Frye, N. (1963). *The educated imagination*. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.
- Gardner, H. (1985). *The mind's new science*. New York: Basic Books.
- . (1991). *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach*. New York: Basic Books.
- Goodman, R.B. (1990). *American philosophy and the Romantic tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Green, J.A. (1912). *Pestalozzi's educational writings*. New York: Longmans, Green & Co.
- . (1969). *The educational ideas of Pestalozzi*. N.Y.: Greenwood Press.
- Greene, M. (1988a). What happened to imagination?. In Kieran Egan and Dan Nadaner (Eds.), *Imagination and education*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- . (1988b). *The dialectic of freedom*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- . (1995). Art and imagination. *Phi delta kappan*, 76:5, 379-385.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *Theory of communicative action*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Hanson, K. (1988). Prospects for the good life: Education and perceptive imagination. In K. Egan and D. Nadaner (Eds.), *Imagination and education*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- Heafford, M. (1967). *Pestalozzi: His thought and its relevance today*. London: Methuen.
- Heath, D. H. (1994). *Schools of hope*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hirsch, E.D. Jr. (1987). *Cultural literacy: What every American needs to know*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Hobbes, T. (1991). *Leviathan*. (R. Tuck, Ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes, J. L. (1897). *Froebel's educational laws for all teachers*. New York & London: D. Appleton and Company.
- Isenberg, J. P., & Jalongo, M. R. (1993). *Creative expression and play in the early childhood curriculum*. New York: Macmillan.
- Jalongo, M. R. The child's right to the expressive arts: Nurturing the imagination as well as the intellect. *Childhood education*, 66:4, 195-201.
- Kant, I. (1952). *Critique of judgment*. (James Creed Meredith, trans.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . (1964). *On education*. (A. Churton, trans.). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

- Karier, C. J. (1986). *The individual, society, and education: A history of American educational ideas* (2nd edition). Urbana & Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- . (1990). Nineteenth-century romantic and neo-romantic thought and some disturbing twentieth-century applications. In J. Willinsky (Ed.), *The educational legacy of Romanticism*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Kearney, R. (1988). *The wake of imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Kilpatrick, W. H. (1914). *The Montessori system examined*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- . (1927). *Education for a changing civilization*. New York: MacMillan.
- Kirkpatrick, E. A. (1921). *Imagination and its place in education*. Boston: Ginn and Company.
- Korzenik, D. (1990). The artist as model learner. In J. Willinsky (Ed.), *The educational legacy of Romanticism*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Kris, E. (1965). Psychoanalysis and the study of the creative imagination. In H. M. Ruitenbeck (Ed.), *The creative imagination*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
- Le Goff, J. (1986). *L'imagination medievale*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Lillard, P. P. (1972). *Montessori: A modern approach*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Lovibond, S. (1983). *Realism and imagination in ethics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After Virtue* (2nd edition). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.
- McVickar, P. et al. (1972). *Imagination: Key to human potential*. Washington, D.C.: National Association for Education of Young Children.
- Martin, J. R. (1981). The ideal of the educated person. *Educational theory*, 31:2, 53-86.

- . (1990). *Romanticism domesticated: Maria Montessori and the Casa dei Bambini*. In J. Willinsky (Ed.), *The educational legacy of romanticism*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Mock, R. (1971). *Education and the imagination*. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Montessori, M. (1964). *The Montessori method*. (A. E. George, trans.). New York: Schocken Books.
- . (1973). *From childhood to adolescence*. (The Montessori Educational Research Center, trans.). New York: Shocken Books.
- Murray, E. L. (Ed.). (1987). *Imagination and phenomenological psychology*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.
- Nakosteen, M. (1965). *The history and philosophy of education*. New York: The Ronald Press Company.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Noll, J. W. & Kelly, S. P. (1970). *Foundations of education in America: An anthology of major thoughts and significant actions*. New York, Evanston, and London: Harper & Row.
- Parker, F. W. (1884). *Talks on pedagogics*. New York: E.L. Kellogg.
- . (1893). *Talks on teaching*. New York: The A.S. Barnes Company.
- Pellegrini, A. D. (1987). *Applied child study: A developmental approach*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Pestalozzi, J. H. (1898). *How Gertrude teaches her children and an account of the method*. (L. E. Holland and F. C. Turner, Eds. and trans.). Syracuse, N.Y.: C.W. Bardeen.
- Piaget, J. (1962). *Play, dreams, and imitation in childhood*. (C. Gattegno and F.M. Hodgson, trans.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Pinar, W. & Grumet, M. (1976). *Toward a poor curriculum*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.
- Perrone, V. (1991). Large purposes. In Kathe Jervis and Carol Montag (Eds.), *Progressive education for the 1990's: Transforming practice*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.

- Richards, I.A. (1968). *Coleridge on imagination*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Rosenblatt, L. (1968). [first published 1938]. *Literature as exploration*. New York: Noble & Noble.
- Rousseau, J. (1961). *Emile*. (B. Foxley, trans.). London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd. & New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc.
- Ryle, G. (1949). *The concept of mind*. London: Hutchinson.
- Sartre, J. (1972). *The psychology of imagination*. London: Methuen.
- Shannon, P. (1989). *Broken promises: Reading instruction in Twentieth-Century America*. Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Shelley, P. B. (1977). *Shelley's poetry and prose*. (D. H. Reiman and S. B. Powers, Eds.). New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Singer, D. G. & Singer, J. L. (1981). *Television, imagination, and aggression: A study of preschoolers*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum.
- . (1990). *The house of make-believe: Children's play and the developing imagination*. Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press.
- Singer, J. (1973). *The child's world of make-believe: Experimental studies of imaginative play*. New York & London: Academic Press.
- Stanislavski, K. (1939). *An actor prepares*. (E. R. Hapgood, trans.). New York: Theater Arts Inc.
- Sugarman, S. (1987). *Piaget's construction of the child's reality*. Cambridge; N.Y.: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self: The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press.
- Thorndike, E. L. (1921). *Educational psychology: Briefer course*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Thorpe, C. (1940). *The aesthetic theory of Thomas Hobbes*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Publications in Language and Literature.
- Tierney, N. L. (1994). *Imagination and ethical ideas: Prospects for a unified philosophical and psychological understanding*. New York: SUNY Press.

- Tizard, B. & Hughes, M. (1984). *Young children and learning: Talking and thinking at home and at school*. London: Fontana Paperbacks.
- Vetlesen, A. J. (1994). *Perception, empathy, and judgment: An inquiry into the preconditions of moral performance*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.
- Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Warnock, M. (1976). *Imagination*. London: Faber.
- . (1977). *Schools of thought*. London: Faber.
- White, A. R. (1990). *The language of imagination*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1949). *The aims of education and other essays*. New York: Mentor, New American Library.
- Willinsky, J. (1991). *The triumph of literature/the fate of literacy: English in the secondary school curriculum*. New York & London: Teachers College Press.
- Willinsky, J. (Ed.). (1990). *The educational legacy of Romanticism*. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Wilson, L. O. (1994). *Every child, whole child: Classroom activities for unleashing natural abilities*. Tuscon, AZ: Zephyr Press.